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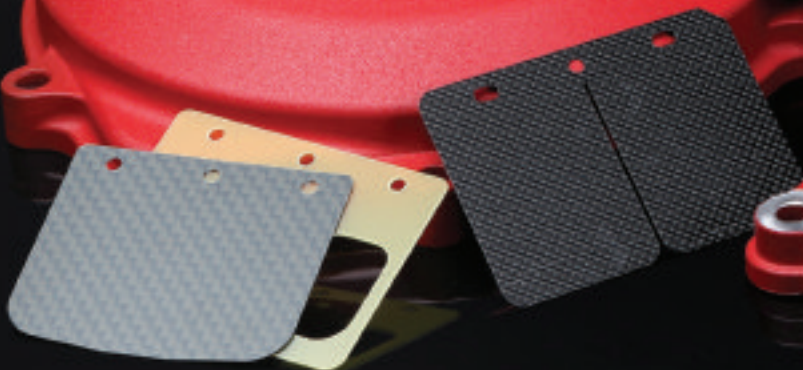
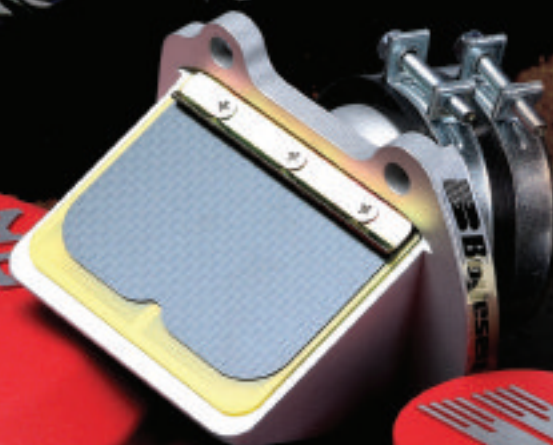
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OVER TO YOU

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© RAY ARCHER

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© RAY ARCHER

COMMENT

First off congratulations to Tommy Searle for getting that 'no major championship wins' monkey off his back and a huge well done to Adam Sterry for clinching what will most likely be his first of many British Championship titles n'all. No doubt they both partied hard into the night after wrapping up their championships at the Foxhill Maxxis finale.

A rider who had his victory celebrations cut short just recently was Team USA's Jason Anderson who after winning the Open/MX2 race at the MXoN, immediately had Chihiro Notsuka land on his head as he rolled the finish line double. The last time a Japanese pilot launched a surprise attack on an American like that was at Pearl Harbor in 1941 so as you can probably imagine the entire MX world was left in shock. Heck, even Youthstream TV commentator Paul Malin was left speechless...

Fortunately, El Hombre was pretty much okay – admittedly he missed race three with a concussion which probably cost Team USA the overall win but was otherwise unharmed – while Notsuka never even crashed, although he did need emergency underwear medevaced to the team truck!

An online argument as to who was in the wrong raged on for days with some saying Anderson was stupid to roll such a huge jump while others on track were still fighting for position but most agreed that as he was in front therefore had 'right of way' so to speak. I reckon our

marketing manager had it right when she said, "if he'd just done a massive pancake with a fist pump thrown in then there wouldn't have been a problem – everyone knows chicks dig whips'. And chains, right Sarah?

And finally, it was great to see the entire Kellett family leave nothing in the bag as they celebrated youngest son Todd take victory in the 34th edition of the Weston Beach Race while big brother Ty took a fine ninth place in the Somerset sand classic.

Aside from the obvious reasons, this victory was definitely deserved and that's partially because the whole Kellett family were very proactive in portraying a positive message about the event following Ty's horrific accident there in 2009 when the race was coming under serious fire from various killjoys for being 'too dangerous'.

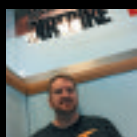
I think for the race to continue almost unchanged after the accident was victory in itself, Todd winning it a few years later is absolutely amazing and Ty finishing inside the top 10 is simply the icing on the cake! You really can't beat a happy ending and this awesome outcome absolutely couldn't have come to a nicer bunch of people...



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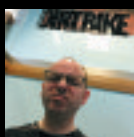
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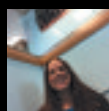
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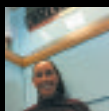
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TONY

CAIROLI



THE EIGHT-TIME WORLD CHAMP MULLS OVER MXONS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE . . .

Hey folks, well here we are again! The MXoN has just ended and I'm back home with another trophy. Unfortunately it's not the one I wanted most – the Chamberlain Cup which is the one that you get if you win the Nations with your team. I knew that it was almost impossible for our team to get that cup and even with some good luck on our side we could probably only ever have got to the third step of the podium. Anyway, I still gave it 100 per cent for my national colours – like always.

The Nations is a strange race and completely different from what we are used to. Motocross is an individual sport but on this special occasion you don't ride just for yourself but for your country and I think that's pretty special. It gives me an extra dollop of motivation! Riding for my country is the reason why I can pull out some fantastic races at the Nations – or end up on my face with a DNF – because I'm willing to take some extra risks in order to help my team to reach a good result!

In my career I have only been on the MXoN podium with Team Italy twice (in Franciacorta and in Teutschenthal) but I have won three individual class titles – at Lommel in 2012 with two victories, in Teutschenthal with two victories in 2013 and in Maggiora this year with two second places.

However, the race that I am most proud of is Matterley Basin back in 2006. I was riding the little Yamaha 250 prepared by De Carli and I won the second moto against the big 450s of the Open class. If I'm not wrong it was the first time a 250 bike won a moto at the Nations.

This year the weekend started very well, with a nice surprise that my girlfriend Jill prepared for my 31st birthday! On Friday we were dining at the Red Bull hospitality like we always do on a Grand Prix weekend and just before we were about to leave all of our friends from the paddock turned up to join us. It was so nice to have all those friends together along with some members of my family that came from Sicily to see the Nations.

On Saturday all seemed to be going in the right direction, I was leading the qualification heat with good confidence but then it all went a bit sideways and I hit the ground pretty hard! When I woke up on Sunday morning I was feeling really sore and painful everywhere and I didn't feel ready to race at all.

In the crash I had hit my head, my shoulder and my leg with the handlebar so I was quite surprised that my riding was not so bad. I had two good starts and if the races had been just a little longer then I think I'd have been able to try and attack for the lead. I was closing the gap on first in both motos but it was just not enough. Thankfully it's good to know that even if I had won those two races it would not have changed anything for Italy, who finished fifth overall.

Because of my personal achievement I got to step on the podium and I have to say that the public was just amazing. Already having ridden in front of such an amazing crowd was fantastic but the view of the people down at the podium was something unbelievable, the flags, smoke, noise and coolers were absolutely superb. In Maggiora we also announced the brand new partnership with Fiat Professional and that's the

reason why I did a little trip to Hannover for a presentation at a Commercial Vehicle Fair.

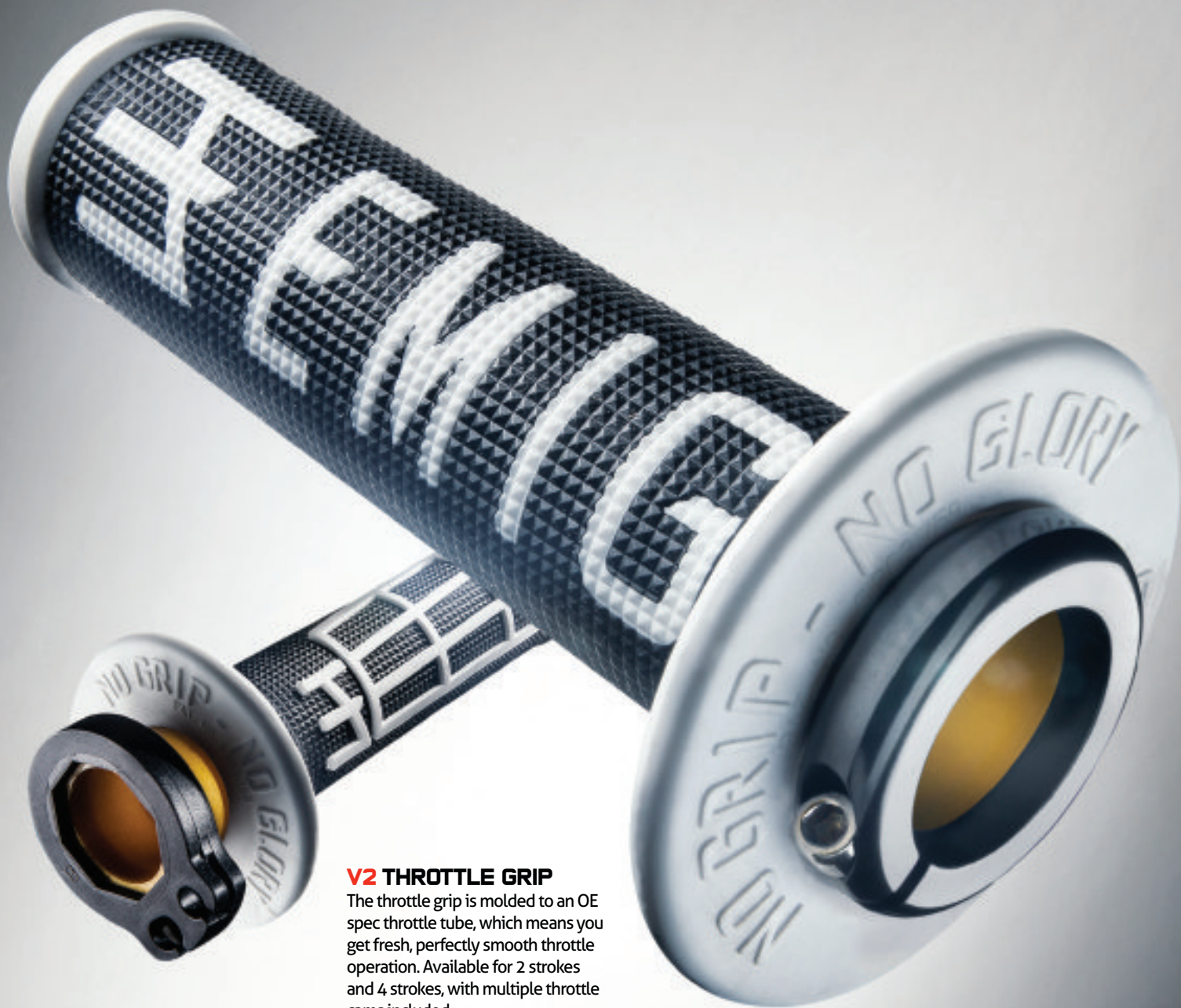
Now it's time to pack the trolley again for the next trip to Mattighofen for the annual rider meeting with Pit Beirer, all the KTM crew and the riders from Europe and USA. As soon as that's finished I will board my next flight to go and have a look at the SMX – a new stadium race that Youthstream organised this year.

It's nice sometimes to take a break and go enjoy a race as a spectator especially because this season was probably the hardest of my career even if I'm satisfied with the results overall. I was improving after the winter crash before getting injured in Matterley Basin then in the second part of the season everything went better and I was riding more as I wanted.

Ciao amici (Bye my friends)!

PS – Hey guys! Did you see the latest news about the Motocross of Nations of 2017? It will be hosted in Matterley Basin instead of Glen Helen and even if I like both tracks I have to say that I'm really pleased to come racing the Nations in the UK where the last edition was in 2008 at Donington Park! See you there!

A stylized red ink signature of Tony Cairoli, written in a cursive, flowing script.



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MAXXIS BRONZE MEDALLIST BRY BOWS OUT AT FOXHILL BUT IS JUST ABOUT READY TO OPEN ANOTHER CHAPTER...

So that's it. I'm dunzo. It's really real. Foxhill has been and gone and I no longer twist hard for a living. I got asked if – in fact, I got told that – I was going to regret it more than once but I'm not so sure. Now that it's happened and it's a month old let's have a wee think about it for a minute to see how it has changed stuff and if I do – or will – regret it because a lot of people questioned my decision and called me an asshole for it.

Okay, so I've just finished a pretty immense season where I was balls deep in the MX2 title fight. I podiumed regularly and was involved in a pretty epic four-way scrap eventually taking the bronze medal but putting my top-five MX2 Maxxis British Championship top-five season finish streak up to 6 in a row (2011-2016) and went into the last moto of this year still with an outside chance of the title.

Hmm, when it's written down like that even I look at it and think what an asshole, right? But I'm not. I actually still feel I have 100 per cent done the right thing and after the last round at Foxhill felt even more so that giving up racing was exactly the right thing for me. I've managed to go out on my own terms – I'm relatively healthy and I wasn't losing speed and therefore still relevant in the sport having just fought for the British Championship.

Okay, so I know this was a bit of a stretch but besides Sterry I was the only other guy that could have mathematically won the championship going into the last race of the season – or my career even. So, really, I'm content with that.

Sure, I didn't win and christ I didn't even finish second in the end but at least I can take peace in the fact that over a whole season I was able to go the distance and take it all the

way to the last drop of the gate. I've worked my whole life up to now to win the prestigious Maxxis British Championship so short of getting the title it's about as close as I could have got, evidently, and that sits fine with me. No one else will ever remember this but I will and I rest easy knowing that every decision and sacrifice I made in my time took me to within a bawhair of the pinnacle of my ambition.

Glory aside I was really overwhelmed by the support I received from the industry and race fans, too. On the Saturday night I was surprised with a retirement party which took me way off guard and half of the pits seemed to have come. On Sunday the ACU also presented me with a plaque recognising my ACU British Championship career which started back in 2002 (and I started racing British Youth Nationals back in 1993) and then let me do my first moto sighting lap by myself and I was massively grateful to see what felt like every spectator, marshal, race team crew, rider and official standing next to the fence and applaud the whole way around! It was pretty emotional if I'm honest as it was a moment that made me feel very accepted and appreciated by our whole sport and almost an assurance that, you know what, you did alright – on and off the track – and I thank everyone.

To be honest there isn't really much to say about my last race. I just didn't have much fight for it. I'd only ridden three times in seven weeks because of my stupid ankle and I had already resigned myself to it being my last race so I was probably on the cautious side of the fine line all day which is so unlike me.

In the final moto I was battling for third place which would have given me second overall on the day but then I saw the one lap to go board

go out and rode up the pit straight debating with myself whether to go for it or not. But you know what they say about never saying 'one more'...they're the times that get you.

So I aborted the attack and coasted the whole last lap to make sure that I finished on the podium that day, in the championship and that I was going to walk away from racing the same way I walked in – as unfortunately many haven't.

So where does that leave me now? Pretty bloody golden, if truth be told. I've got more time than cash but with the wee one about that doesn't bother me just now. I'm getting work done down the track and finally having the time to realise some ideas I've had for the place the past couple of years and develop a new side to the business.

I've also got another project or two present itself which is tapping into some of the experience I gained from years of pulling my sleeves up and getting up to my elbows in the difficult sh*t. Rider training has gone off like a North Korean missile, too, and I'm starting to get booked out with guys wanting to do a little work together through winter.

But finally and most importantly I hope to increase my workload with these fine bitches from the Dirt Bike Book so perhaps I won't be too far away at all times...



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STEVE

HOLCOMBE



AFTER A FEW WEEKS OF TAKING THINGS EASY OUR ENDURO 3 WORLD CHAMP IS GETTING BACK TO BUSINESS STARTING WITH A TRIP TO ITALY FOR A LITTLE END OF YEAR TESTING . . .

From around November of last year all I've really been focused on is the 2016 Enduro World Championship, doing all I could firstly to get ready for it and then, once it started, to do as best I could race by race. Soon after the start of the championship the goal was to win the Enduro 3 championship. Month after month that goal remained the same.

Now that all's said and done and the hard work paid off, it's taken a little while to unwind that mindset of thinking about winning. This might sound strange but after such a long time thinking a certain way it's taken a little while for everything that's happened this year to really sink in. The feeling of knowing I'm a world champion has now really sunk in and it certainly doesn't get old.

One thing that didn't take long was to start unwinding and taking some time to do, well, not too much of anything really. I couldn't fully relax straight away after the final world championship race in France because I had a British championship race soon after. Winning both championships was what I hoped to do this year and, despite crashing out on day one at the Natterjack Enduro, I managed to add the BEC title to my Enduro 3 championship. It was definitely one of those weekends full of ups and downs.

It's kind of strange that I won a world title before winning a British title, but hey, I'll take

it any way it comes. But it was certainly a rollercoaster of a weekend. Getting to catch up with folk back home after everything that happened at the final world championship race was great, then I went and crashed fairly spectacularly on the first day of the event banging up my shoulder good and proper.

Luckily nothing was seriously damaged and on the second day I did what I needed to do to secure the title after coming so close last year. Since then bikes have remained pretty much firmly in my garage. I dragged the trials bike out once or twice but I've switched off from racing and training, enjoyed some good nights out with mates and generally enjoyed some chill out time. One thing I'm well aware of is that 2017 is only just around the corner and that it won't be long before it's full steam ahead as I start working towards another busy year of racing.

Getting some time to myself has allowed me to do something I've been wanting to do all season – work on my practice track. I figure that a little graft now will give me a better track to train on come next spring or whenever I'm home in the UK and looking to do some solid training.

Right now my track isn't looking too good, mainly because of the mess we made to the ground around it while getting it built up. The most important thing is that the essential work's been done, and with a little tidying up when the ground starts to dry out next year she'll be in

good shape and good to go again.

I had hoped to be at Weston racing this year but instead I have to head to Italy, for an end-of-year event (and party I'm hoping) with Beta. It's going to be good to catch up with everyone and get a few last details figured out for 2017 and then get some testing done. In all honesty I'm not really back into a racing mindset but while I'm still reasonably bike fit it's important to get back on the race bike and try a few different things ready for 2017.

As this year went on there were a few things I started thinking about, things that I wanted to test at the end of the season, so now I get the chance to do that. If they improve the bike, well that's great. If they don't, nothing ventured, nothing gained. Either way it's going to be good to catch up with my team mates again.

Finally, I'm going to be at the Dirt Bike Show on Friday October 28 somewhere not too far from the Beta, Leatt or Forma stands. Feel free to call by – it'll be great to meet some of you who've supported me this season. Catch ya next month!
Steve

Handwritten signature: H. Holcombe #70

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DANIEL

GROVE

OUR FACTORY SPECTATOR CELEBRATES TWO YEARS OF SHARING HIS THOUGHTS WITH US BY SHARING MORE OF HIS THOUGHTS WITH US...

Can you believe that I've been populating this page with all sorts of motocross related stories for two years now? I think I've added a different way of looking at races, topics and events to this magazine and as I am certainly no journalist I like to think that I've added a real-world/man-on-the-ground angle on some stuff.

I've knocked up 24 columns comprising of around 24,000 words in total and I've probably spent at least two days of my life devoting myself to getting something in on time to fill this page up and I hope you've enjoyed reading at least one of them over the last couple of years. If you've read each and every column then I must thank you for doing so but seriously, where does the time go? Two years, crazy...

Anyhow, in my first ever column that hit the shelves in late October 2014 I debated about the newly formed MX Nationals series that started in 2014 and the returning for 2015 Pirelli British Masters series and whether or not there was room for both, just because there's not an awful lot of riders out there. Well, there are but they mostly ride practice tracks. If you're one of those guys then get out there and enter a race or two in 2017 and I can guarantee that it'll change your overall outlook on motocross and you'll absolutely love it.

Towards the end of the 2016 I realised just how much I missed racing and now look – it's cold, dark, and wet outside which means it's the off season and not the ideal conditions for racing or practicing. So, make it a New Year's resolution to race somewhere next year and thank me if you see me at a track somewhere afterwards...

It's only fitting that I revisit the two series above on this monumental day in motocross media and see how they're both getting on and then provide them with another idea for them to chew on. Inadvertently they've both done some of the things I suggested unless they really did take my column from two years

ago on board of course...

Looking at the provisional calendar for both series for 2017 they're both down to six rounds whereas they both used to run more which means that they're both a little more affordable and as any series goes on people do lose a little interest – especially if the first round is early March and the last one is September or even October. So for next year both series are running six rounds beginning in March and ending in August which gets a tick in my book.

I'm glad that this has happened because the topic of this column was going to be about running an additional race in September for both series in a head-to-head team event and given that both series will be done in August then 2017 is the year to do it!

The format would mirror what's already on offer from both championships so there would be an 85 race, 125, MX2, Clubman/Amateur and then the all important Pro races. To determine which series you represent then you would simply take the top 20 from each championship class from each series and in the instance where a rider does both championships put him on the team that he has had the best overall championship position in.

For the Pro races – and as each series receives backing from two different tyre brands (Michelin for the MX Nationals and Pirelli for the British Masters) – this could be used to create the teams from each championship and then the remaining riders for each team would be put on the team for the series they compete in or which series they had the highest final series ranking in. The 'Race of Championships' race could take place in September and there are numerous reasons for running such an event.

Given that the top 20 from each class would be put on the team, some riders may drop out or decide not to race or end up switching teams so that means that everyone between 20th and 30th places have something to race for to be part of an awesome

team event.

The event would gain some serious exposure across social media and if it was marketed right in the run up to the event however the first hurdle would be getting both series organisers in the same room and then decide on who actually runs the event. I can't say that I have any involvement with either party but surely both of them could come together to create a unique event that attracts riders and spectators alike, not to mention the bragging rights for the overall winners!

If you wanted to go really wild and really maximise the event you could add in an AMCA Championship team as most of the top 10 in both classes really like to go to town on Facebook after a championship round so it could make for some of the best racing ever seen in the UK. It may be the off-season but I was totally sober while typing this up... hic.

One off events are the future as we have seen over recent years with the Vets MXdN, the actual MXdN, Monster Cup, Red Bull Straight Rhythm etc so it's time to capitalize on this and create a race that riders of all levels can get excited about and have to race the full series to earn a spot on a team which actually means something. It could be really good...

Hopefully the guys behind running these series at least get their heads together at the International Dirt Bike Show over a brew after reading this and at least discuss this as a potential event, which would ultimately see more spectators through the gates and more racers on the line for both series late into the season instead of seeing the last round or two feature half empty gates. Let's make this happen!

Daniel Grove



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JAKE

NICHOLLS



JAKE REFLECTS ON A SOLID SEASON AND TAKES A HOLIDAY TO CELEBRATE...

So the season is finally over! I don't mean it like I'm happy, or do I? Meh, I'm 60/40 happy that it's come to an end. Part due to wear and tear on the body from 40 race days since January but personally it's mainly due to being relieved to have made it through a full season with no injuries. After my last two years it's all I was after – and to have some decent rides in the process.

Obviously, I wasn't turning up to the races and just riding around to make up the numbers but the injuries from past years, the tough times sitting at home, wondering if I'll get another opportunity were things that were always on my mind. It definitely affected the way I raced at times.

Maybe that guy back in 2013 would have taken certain risks on certain days that I just wasn't prepared to do this year. But this is where I've been lucky with the people around me this year – if I were to have joined a team who didn't know much about my past, or my character and were only worried about top results then I could be typing something very different right now.

So on the days where something wasn't quite right this year, or I just wasn't myself, I got treated exactly the same by everyone around me – my team, my wife, my parents and my friends. But at the same time I knew that they knew I was on the right track.

Compared to last year where all my results were terrible, my friends and wife didn't treat me any different but I could tell, I could get the vibe from them that they knew something wasn't right, I was going the wrong direction, making bad decisions and not close to fulfilling my potential.

So I guess what I'm getting at here, is that even though each weekend, on Sunday night I gave a sigh of relief that I had made it through another event unscathed and I had an extra bit of confidence that all would be okay from the people around me. They could see me working hard and

how focused I was but also that I had learnt from some mistakes.

All this aside, you need some fortune in racing and that's something that we can't completely control. I'm happy to be having some time off although all riders are different and some don't really like to switch off from it all. But I do like to step away from it for a bit, have a few beers with my crew and this off-season has meant that I can finally sort my garden out.

Having bought a property just shy of three acres a year ago and being away nearly all summer, there's a lot of bloody work to do. So I've been pretty much flat out with that since Foxhill. Had a mini digger in the garden, cleared out the pond, scraped the driveway and dug out an extra bit ready for some fresh road planings to be dropped in and cleared the previous owners veggie patch out ready for some fresh gear to be planted in there (not that sort of gear). And I also built a minibike track and finished the RC track off. It's all stuff that I've been looking forward to doing for months.

It's funny but I spent one afternoon power washing the conservatory roof and I was pretty pooped after it which made me realise again why I can't and don't get those sort of jobs done throughout the season. A rare morning or afternoon or even a full day off means off, as in, on the sofa watching Liar Liar and not digging up the veggie patch up or building a compost heap.

The last race of the season for me was at Foxhill and it was pretty pants. I was still pretty jet-lagged from Glen Helen the previous weekend and after having a blood test that showed very good results it transpired that I had suffered from heat stroke there which was why I was so weak and empty. I sealed third in the championship in the first race so the second one I just really wanted to get through with no issues. I faded like a cheap suit, I can tell you. Foxhill isn't the nicest place to ride

when feeling weak and the amount of times my hands nearly came off in the races was quite something.

It was a cool feeling getting third in the series and being so close up till the end behind Tommy and Shaun. It was nice that they did a podium for the championship on the day – I sprayed a bit of champagne and drunk the rest, in pure joy that I had made it to the end.

Can't thank Roger Magee enough for giving me a chance this year, a big thanks to Jamie Dobb too for sorting my deals out but also all his work behind the scenes with the team. I'd also like to thank Ian Browne for all his hard work this year, huge thanks to Steve Fry the everything man of the team – he gets himself to the races purely to help others and enjoys it so much – it's been a pleasure working with you this year and to Steve Henderson, Mr. Grumpy my mechanic. He puts 100 per cent effort into those 450s that I raced this year – they were like his babies. God knows how he made them – those poor old FMF silencers...

Thanks to Warren the truck driver too – never has one man washed so much kit of mine in a year and had it smelling and looking mint every time. Thanks to the whole team – myself and Blu have had a right laugh this year and we're looking forward to another season at it.

I'm typing this on a plane to Dubai for a holiday with the missus and our friends Olly Banks and Lewis Tombs. It will be nice to lie about and eat, making the most of it before November 1 when all the hard work starts again...



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Tommy Searle picks up the Maxxis MX1 title at the Foxhill season finale

MXON MADNESS, MAXXIS MELTDOWNS, MATTERLEY MUSINGS, MEGAWATT MAGIC AND MUCH MORE . . .

Tommy Searle won his second ever British championship title after clinching the '16 Maxxis British Motocross Championship at Foxhill by only two points over defending champ, Shaun Simpson. Believe it or not but the first and only championship

Tommy had won prior was an 85cc BYN championship way back when Tommy used to wear shell-suits. It's unbelievable that he has only just won his first British Maxxis title of his career being the leading Brit abroad for much of it but Tommy has only ever committed four full seasons to racing in the UK since turning pro.

Adam Sterry won his first MX2 British Championship but his new three-year signing with CLS Kawasaki to race GPs will likely not see him fight to keep his crown next season.

In fact the Maxxis British championship is potentially going to look a little desolate next year as some of the major race teams bow out going into 2017. The powerful STR race team have shut up shop after owner Steve Turner has decided he wants to slow the pace of life down a little, the formidable Apico Husky team has also called it a day as has Neil Prince with Suzuki, allegedly.

Rumour also has it that Steve Dixon could potentially focus his racing efforts solely on GPs next season but that is unconfirmed. This news is a major kick in the nuts to the British

Championship and a lot of ride opportunities lost for the domestic pros.

Between STR, Apico and Dixon they took five of the six places on the podium in the two championship classes this year so their disappearance will be felt but could open doors for someone else to step forward and fill the paddock front row – let's hope so.

Talking of Apico Husky they are stepping away because team owner Richard Clarke – Steven Clarke's dad – is choosing to support his son in having another tilt at the 250cc East Coast Supercross series in the US. Clarke feels he has unfinished business Stateside and before it gets too late in his career – him now being 26 years old – would like to give it another shot. He will be riding a privateer bike.

In this year's Maxxis, only four riders were able to score points in every race of the season – two riders in MX2 and two riders in MX1. They were myself (Bry Mac), Jake Millward, Shaun Simpson and Brad Anderson. We were the only guys to hit the score sheet after every drop of the gate and Ando was the oldest boy on the line this season. Maybe he's matured?

Drug testing is not unusual in any realm of sport but for the first time ever it came to British Motocross while at Foxhill to close out the season. I'm not going to wade into it too much as a lot of feelings were hurt by it but

it happened and personally I don't think it's necessarily a bad thing.

Has the Nations ever been as suspenseful? In the final moto of the weekend the country in the driving seat to take home the Chamberlain Trophy changed four times. The Dutch led the overall classification for the first 15 minutes of moto three before Glen Coldenhoff dropped a few positions which promoted America into the leading force.

An error from Cooper Webb – the single American in the race after Jason Anderson DNSed because of a freak accident at the end of race two – late in the race then put the Netherlands back in control going into the final lap of the day until France's Romain Febvre passed Britain's Tommy Searle during the last half lap which promoted them straight to the top step for the third season in a row. Edge of the seat stuff or what?

Surprisingly the Netherlands took it all the way down to the last half a lap and were ousted off the top step only because of a determined Frenchman. But figure this, the Dutchies, renowned for their sand prowess, were nearly crowned the strongest motocross nation in the world on a hardpack track. You can only guess the outcome if it were a sand-based track this year.

Going back to Jason Anderson for a moment.



Jeffrey Herlings signs off his 250cc career with a win in Glen Helen

US ace Jason Anderson relaxes before taking a Pearl Harbour style attack atop his noggin. What, too soon?



Team Ireland representing the white, gold and green at the MXoN



Team France topped the MXoN for a third year



Jeffrey Herlings' 450 debut is nothing short of magnificent

He did his bit for the red, white and blue as he won the second race of the day (MX2/Open). After a brief battle with Jeffrey Herlings, Anderson rode on to take the win but the craziest thing happened after he rolled the finish line jump when a Japanese kamikaze pilot landed on Anderson as he rolled over the down ramp. The incident was well publicised and certainly a talking point of the weekend but surprisingly El Hombre spoke out after the event relatively uninjured. In fact, Anderson did need surgery afterwards but it was for an unstable fracture in his foot that he picked up from a first corner crash in his qualifying race on Saturday. Respect.

The Irish were once again kings of the B-Final using the last roll of the dice to propel themselves into the main point scoring motos for the 64th time in a row (at a guess).

Things could have been different though if Irish team leader Graeme Irwin hadn't dislocated his shoulder. Irwin washed the front end out coming down a hill as he coasted around his second lap of first practice changing the complexion of the weekend for Team Ireland in an instant.

The day was saved though by Marty Barr and Open rider Stuey Edmonds. Edmonds

rode a heroic B-Final after going down in turn one but recovering just enough to back up Barr's stellar ride up front to transfer them into the main event. Edmonds later had his helmet and race shirts stolen just before one of his races leaving him further flustered so it was a challenging weekend from start to finish for the Irish team.

Who the hell was the #112? I had to look him up, too. I didn't know whether I was calling him Kevin, Kaven or Chris but Kaven Benoit's riding definitely didn't leave much to wonder. Every year the MXoN throws up a surprise and this year was Benoit – a French-Canadian two-time Canadian MX2 Champion riding his second Nations for Canada. He was the guy that ran up front with world champions and established MXGP runners all weekend long and finish sixth overall in the individual MXGP classification.

Shockingly, straight after the MXoN in Maggiora it was announced that the 'Olympics of Motocross' scheduled next year for Glen Helen would be cancelled due to poor attendance of the US MXGP round there over the past two seasons. Insisting that the MXoN is an event that hugely desires massive crowds and fan participation the motocross hierarchy decided that the



WHEELIE KING!

DOUGIE LAMPKIN DOES A DOUG DOMOKOS AROUND THE IOM TT COURSE

Dougie Lampkin has become the first person to wheelie the entire length of the Isle of Man TT course.

He's some man for one man as Dougie Lampkin created another little piece of motorcycling history by continuously riding the 37 and three-quarter mile long IOM TT track on the rear wheel.

Under the watchful eye of Red Bull TV – no pressure – Lampkin left the TT grandstand and through a rolling road closure navigated his way around the TT course and into the record books as the first rider ever to do so.

Regarding it as stressful as any world title he's ever won, he's since vowed never to do it again!

WALKER'S MEGAWATT!

JONNY ACES POLISH EXTREME EVENT

Jonny Walker made a triumphant return to Hard Enduro by winning the Polish Red Bull 111 Megawatt.

In what turned out to be a battle of the ages, Walker narrowly held on to the win over Mario Roman, Wade Young and Graham Jarvis.

Now in its third year, the Megawatt delivered the goods this time around as the world's best Hard Enduro riders went bar-to-bar for the three-hour duration of the race. The race lead changed hands countless times as the soft wet sand and towering hillclimbs played havoc.

In the end it was Walker who scaled the final climb first to win with Roman shadowing him across the line just two seconds adrift in the runner-up position. Third overall went to Young with Jarvis in fourth.



TURKISH DELIGHT!

LARS ENOCKL WINS SEA TO SKY

Lars Enockl has won the 2016 Red Bull Sea to Sky in Turkey. The Austrian privateer delivered a surprise win in the Turkish Hard Enduro by racing his way to the top of the mountain first to claim victory over Andreas Lettenbichler and Scott Bouverie.

With both KTM and Husqvarna withdrawing their factory riders from the race, the notable absence of Jonny Walker and Graham Jarvis ensured competition was wide open this year.

Hopes for a British victory were high in the form of Billy Bolt but disaster struck the Hard Enduro rookie during each of the three days of competition. Off to a flying start with the fastest time in the Beach Race qualification, Bolt had the Beach Race win in the bag until a broken chain ruined his chances.

On course to win the Forest Race, Bolt massively overshot the final jump entering the finishing arena wrecking a rear wheel. He pushed it home for the fastest time but was handed a five minute penalty for cutting out a corner of the track. Harsh.

Then Lady Luck properly put an end to proceedings in the Mountain Race with yet another broken chain followed later but a clutch issue.

WESTON WARRIORS

TODD KELLET WINS WESTON

Crescent KTM's Todd Kellett proved master of the sand as he stormed his way to victory in the Weston Beach Race.

Battling wheel to wheel with Estonia's Taniel Leok (KTM), local lad Kellett beat the MXGP winner to the chequered flag by nine seconds while Honda's Martin Barr completed the top three.

"It's a really emotional win," told Kellett at the end of the three-hour race. "Eight years ago I won in the 65cc class, four years ago I won in the 85cc class, but to win the adult class, well I can't put it into words, I'm over the moon. I got the holeshot, and the battle was so intense it was like a motocross race."

The 34th edition of the Hydrogarden Weston Beach Race was one to saviour with a top draw of talent coming out to play. Kellett, Leok and Barr were joined by Robbie Maddison, Jonny Walker, MotoGP's Scott Redding and Jamie Law to name but a few of the 800 starters who made the annual pilgrimage to Weston.

Kellett, who finished fifth last year, got the holeshot after the first straight, with Walker and Leok close behind into the first turn. However, Walker crashed on the second lap over one of the enormous dunes that the race is famous for, while a determined Leok took to the front.

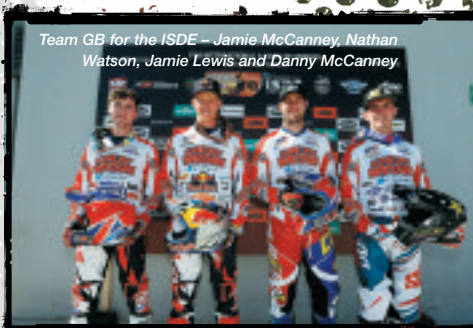
Kellett and Leok, who finished fifth in the British MX1 championship this year, fought it out just seconds apart to the final lap of the ultra-gruelling three-hour race in front of a 70,000-strong crowd.

Kellett took an emphatic win, with Leok close behind in second, while Irishman Martin Barr held onto third in his Weston Beach Race debut.

Impressive stuff from Kellett considering he'd raced Saturday's three-hour Quad and Sidecar race with his brother Ty.



If DBR dished out covers based on the quality of team hugs then Adam Sterry would be on the front every single month



Team GB for the ISDE - Jamie McCanney, Nathan Watson, Jamie Lewis and Danny McCanney



Team GB Juniors - Josh Gotts, Lee Sealey and Jack Eddy

gamble to run in America was too great and later picked Matterley Basin as its replacement - yay!

Stateside expat Dean Wilson still has no ride for the 2017 season. Deano has had two big injury hit years since moving onto the 450 but the ex-250 national champ finished in the top-five often at the end of the season after returning from another knee reconstruction. Unfortunately that wasn't enough to guarantee him a spot under an awning yet and hasn't ruled out the idea of racing somewhere else besides the US for a couple of seasons to re-establish himself and has already spoken to a couple of teams this side of the world about MXGP.

Apparently James Stewart is going to ride Honda in 2017 on his own team of sorts. Brother Malcolm is riding 450 for Geico Honda and 'Bubba' is expected to pit out of the same truck as his bro with limited support from Geico and HRC while running his own Se7en graphics and with his own personal title sponsor. It is also believed that '17 will be his final season racing.

Definitely riding for 'big red' is Kenny Roczen. Roczen has parted with RCH Suzuki after two successful seasons to ride on the full factory supported American Honda squad taking the sport formerly filled by Trey Canard. Canard instead will ride Orange alongside Dungey and Musquin much like Dean Wilson did this year.

KTM and Husqvarna Motorcycles are recalling certain models of their 2017 ranges. With an issue arising with the machining of a certain batch of their front brake cylinders they are advising anyone which may be affected to visit an authorised dealer for an inspection as the imperfection could lead to early wear of the ability to seal the unit and therefore lesser braking performance. It's not the end of the world but it's worth checking out.

In typical deadline fashion we go to print just as this year's ISDE is about to begin, so you'll probably know who's won before you read this, but that won't stop us wishing the British boys the best of luck.

It's the biggest race on the enduro calendar - and also the longest serving race in the FIM - and a must-do weeklong event that's high priority on any off-road rider's bucket list. With hundreds of amateur and hobby riders battling it out with the best of the best enduro riders it's certainly a real treat.

For the 91st edition, the ISDE sees a shakeup of the rule book. The World Trophy teams are reduced to four riders (from six) and the Junior squad drops from four to three riders. It's a throwback to the golden olden days of the ISDE and is one that's set to make this year's race very interesting indeed.

Our British lads are well up for the challenge and with a wealth of talent and experience between them we're hoping a top five or better is a realistic target.

In the World Team we've got Manx brothers Jamie and Danny McCanney (both former Junior World Champions), Nathan Watson (the 2016 rookie sensation of EnduroGP) and the vastly experienced Jamie Lewis. With the best three scores counting each day there's no reason - that we can see of - for them not to be awesome in Spain.

In the Junior ranks, Team Britain boasts this year's 125 world champion Jack Edmondson and Lee Sealey third overall. They are joined by Josh Gotts - another rider who's enjoyed an impressive EnduroGP campaign. All well accustomed to the dry and dusty terrain that Spain will no doubt bring, the boys will be giving it their all.

In total eight club teams will also start for Great Britain in Spain. Team Scotland, Team St George, Witley A, Witley B, British Army Enduro, Dyfed Dirt Bike, IOM Southern MCC and Team Wales. Best of luck lads. 🐾

IDBS IS GO!

Stoneleigh Park is hot to host the
International Dirt Bike Show 2016



The MXGP championship is done and dusted with a new champ – Gariboldi Honda's Tim Gajser – sitting on top of the standings. The British motocross series is a wrap too with two new champions crowned – that's Tommy Searle and Adam Sterry just in case you missed it.

And with that it can only mean it's nearly that time of year again when the leading off-road brands bring their newest stuff under one roof at Warwickshire's Stoneleigh Park. We are of course talking about the International Dirt Bike Show in partnership with MOTUL which is Europe's biggest and best indoor off-road event that's now right around the corner.

Traditionally, the show is four days of off-road gear, sweet deals, pro rider unveilings, awesome dirt related entertainment and of course the bikes, oh the bikes! And IDBS 2016 should be no different. Thank the dirt biking gods.

The buzz has been building for a while about what we'll see from the manufacturers, who will come together to display a staggering number of bikes covering virtually every off-road discipline, both on display and for sale, including 2017 models for motocross, trials and enduro.

Industry titans Honda, Husqvarna, KTM, Suzuki and Yamaha will be packing production machines into Hall 2, showcasing the advances and upgrades which have been made to next year's ranges.

Beta, Bultaco, Gas Gas, JotaGas, Mecatecno, Rieju, Sherco and Vertigo are also all confirmed to attend showcasing their bikes and giving visitors the chance to chat with their teams of experts.

If you've got a machine sorted for next year, you're going to need all the gear to go with it, and that's

where the show's two huge retail and trade halls come in. The leading distributors of top-of-the-range clothing will all be on-site offering great deals on the latest kit, along with accessories, riding gear, cleaning products and more.

And it's not just yourself that you can treat; get a few bits for your bike as well with the leading tyre brands for sale direct from the major players and from retailers. Plus, you'll find parts and spares in our Motojumble.

With the show taking place in late October, it's the perfect time to stock up ahead of a new year of riding, or get your hands on a few perfect Christmas presents for your nearest and dearest.

And the four days aren't just about getting you to part with your hard-earned. There's plenty to get involved with and watch, including visitor favourites such as Minibike Supercross, on-stage entertainment, have-a-go electric trials and the incredible Wall of Death. There will also be trials from trials legend Dougie Lampkin – a 12-time world champion and the 2016 Scottish Six Days Trial winner – who'll be joined by mountain bike ace Danny Butler and friends.

Younger members of the family are looked after too with a dedicated Electric Trials area for kids, quads, remote-controlled motorcycle racing and Strider balance bikes.

After enjoying all of that, head over to the hub of activity which is the main stage for a sit down, and watch on as Eurosport commentator and off-road fanatic Jack Burnicle interviews star riders, industry figureheads and racing legends.

Enjoy all of this with a day out at the International Dirt Bike Show in partnership with MOTUL.



VISIT N' SAVE!

Turn a visit to the show into a family day out and cut some costs...

Seeing as the show falls during many schools' half-term holidays, why not bring the kids along? A family ticket – two adults/two children – is priced at just £40 for any of the four days. With so much going on at one venue for such a low price it's easy to see why this is a must-not-miss for thousands of dirt biking fans.

Admission fees

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Adult | £16 |
| Child (11-15) | £10 |
| Senior | £10 |
| Family (two adults/two children) | £40 |

To buy tickets follow the links from dirtbikeshow.co.uk or call 01507 529529

IDBS ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

Check out the new IDBS website

The International Dirt Bike Show website has undergone a refresh ahead of the 2016 event, offering visitors mobile-friendly access to the latest updates and information.

Along with a modern new look which resizes for any and all desktops and devices, the site features news feeds from leading off-road publications and show media partners Dirt Bike Rider and TMX. There are also updates from the organising team in the build-up to the event itself, and throughout its duration regular updates will keep show goers informed all the details, the timetable and exhibitor news.

Other features include a photo gallery, links to download the International Dirt Bike Show App and a feed from the event Facebook page. Traders and exhibitors can also use the site to find relevant contact details and download trade application forms.

To see the new site (or for any further information about the event) visit dirtbikeshow.co.uk – and be sure to add it to your favourites.

CITY ENDURO

20

GOAT
MOUNTAIN

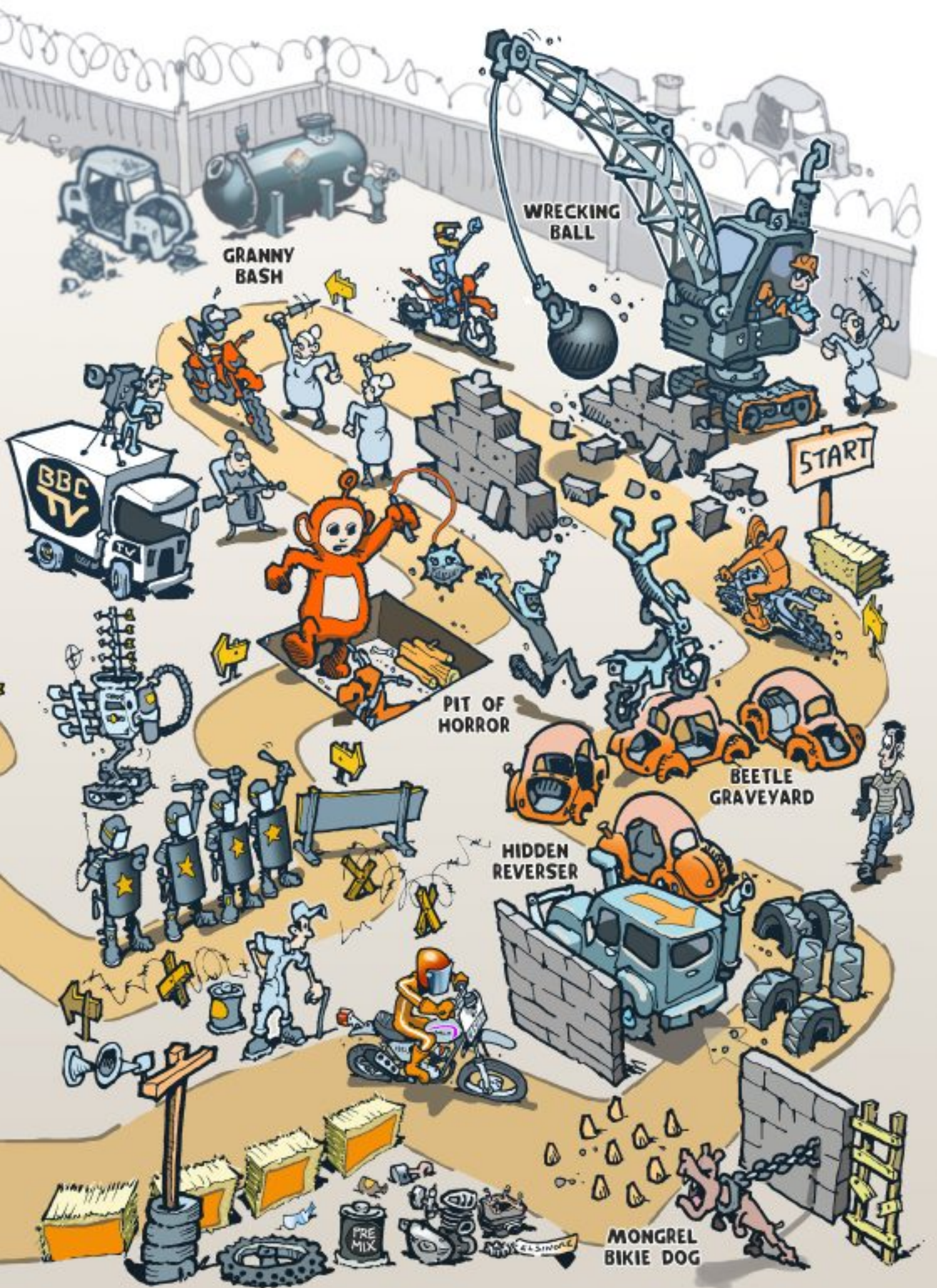
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TIM GAJSER THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

Unravelling the sensation that stormed MXGP in 2016 . . .

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer

Tim Gajser is standing in the darkness. We're at Fox's Celebration of Speed in their modern and typically Californian office – all open plan, bright, airy, cubic and creative – and somebody has neglected to sort out some stage lights for Jeff Emig and Ricky Carmichael as they intro the impressive roster of the brand's athletes who have succeeded in 2016. Gajser is the last to be welcomed to the platform and after the duo – with their banter and friendly jibes – have spoken with Ryan Dungey, Livia Lancelot and received a video message from the holidaying Ken Roczen.

It is a mark of Gajser's humility that he handles the attention and the spotlight – or lack of one – with grace and a giddy sense of 'what am I doing here?'. He accepts a cake for his 20th birthday and there is an audible sense of disbelief from Carmichael that the Slovenian has trailblazed to so much success at such a young age.

Fox's proceedings come prior to the season-closing Monster Energy Grand Prix of USA and has their usual high level of presentation and thought. A floodlit Pro-Am minibike track is noisily gathering attention outside, food comes courtesy of fresh tacos, a live

band gets ready to jam and cocktails named after the riders are being served – Gajser's mix being vodka, lemonade and 'Honda' strawberry.

Gajser – as ever flanked by his father Bogomir and older brother Nejc – is shaking hands and doing the rounds. He became the first back-to-back FIM World Champion in different classes since Greg Albertyn in '92-'93 only four days beforehand and is the youngest MXGP title winner since the invention of the four-stroke formula.

Tim may seem a little wide-eyed with what is bound to be just a slice of victory spoils but the grin and the giggle are in place. As is the maturity that helped him decimate the MXGP class in 2016 and deal with a raft of rivals far older and more experienced.

Gajser ripped through the premier category from the get-go with a 1-1 in Qatar. He went on to win almost 50 per cent of the 36 motos and gathered 16 podium results from 18 rounds (winning seven overalls with eight Pole Positions). There was nothing lucky, circumstantial or questionable about his synergy with the CRF450RW and how he whipped, turned-down, gunned and guided that motorcycle to a run of dominance. >>



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"We knew that Tim was really fast on a 450 and that he was strong. We saw him winning two motos easily last year in the German Championship but to win a title with such consistency all season we honestly did not expect that," opines Team Manager and Owner Giacomo Gariboldi a few days later in the paddock at Glen Helen.

"I didn't really see a change in him," the Italian adds. "I think his riding style became a little less aggressive and he is thinking more during a race as well as cutting down the risks he used to take with a 250. But otherwise he is still the Tim we met and know from 2014."

"Tim is the full package," comments HRC General Manager Roger Harvey – the man responsible for signing Gajser to a multi-year factory deal during 2015 that will keep '243' in 'red' for the next three seasons and maybe in 2020 also. "Obviously he is very young and being that age you probably expected something different from him – you saw how he had to 'get up' a few times on the 250 last year. He is an unbelievable thinker. He works things out and doesn't really change his strategy. He is very much what I term as old school 'go out and win it'. I can relate to him because he is so much like the guys I used to race – hard as nails, never gives up and just keeps pushing and pushing. It's like he is from another era."

Gajser's story is quite well known. 'Tiga' comes as part of a family package with Nejc serving as his right-hand man and Bogo the ever-present trainer and mentor – frequently

seen barking at his son in the start gate. The rapid-fire Slovenian dialogue coming like some kind of mantra at Tim's back as he preps the ground.

Off the bike and Gajser's yellow cap is always steadfastly in place and although he claimed Honda's first #1 plate since 2000 in the blue ribbon division of the sport he will not budge from the '243' that has become a badge of honour and symbol for the brother he never knew and was killed motocrossing before Tim was born.

European 65, 85, 125 and World 125 titles hoisted Gajser as a junior to a level that nobody could ignore. He was part of KTM's programme until a forgettable first Grand Prix year in 2013 where several mechanical problems caused the family to become disillusioned with the orange brand.

Michele Rinaldi jetted to Slovenia to try and bring Gajser to Yamaha but the clan opted for Gariboldi's Honda set-up instead for 2014 and that's when he claimed his first Grand Prix podium and also grabbed fifth in the MX2 series at his first full attempt...while still at school and studying economics.

Since a maiden Grand Prix win at Arco di Trento in 2015, MXGP circuits have become distinctly more yellow and boisterous with an enlarging Slovenian contingent following their new hero. In a country with a population of just 2.5 million people, Gajser's (now double) world championship status seems to have captured national attention.

The rider from Ptju has stirred MXGP to the core, even prompting new thinking on the youth and intensity needed to win at the very tip of the motocross pyramid. After Romain Febvre's breakthrough rookie success at the age of 23 in 2015, Gajser then developed a whole new level of riding and performance. We wanted some insight from those working with him as to the 'hows' and 'whys'.

"He is analytical and he can work things out race to race and even lap to lap and you don't see that in many riders," offers Harvey. "Let's go back two years to Argentina. Race one – a disaster. Terrible. I spoke to him after and asked what was going on and he shook his head and said 'no...I need to go back and reset'. That was him thinking about what he did in that first race and making sure it didn't happen in the second and the result was that he was right up there. Generally he is 'on it' and he's very aware of his surroundings and what is going on in the race. Add to that he is a hard and physical character."

"He is riding the Honda how it should be ridden," he adds. "He is quite smooth and that's the DNA of Honda. It is smooth and rideable and quick enough to win Grands Prix so we've seen. He is using a 450 how it should be ridden."

"It is very difficult for a rider to keep the focus over 18 GPs," says Gariboldi. "There are so many motos. Everybody has been up-and-down this season. Tim had a few difficult GPs

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Tony Cairoli could only watch on as Gajser steamrollered his way to the MXGP title

– like Assen and Lommel – where he did not reach the podium but I think you have to expect this from a 19-year-old kid.

“I think he felt the pressure at the end of the season whereas up to halfway he just went out to play and enjoy. I believe when he saw the lead go up and almost reach 100 points then he was thinking seriously about winning the championship and the pressure came but nobody was putting that on him – we weren’t even talking about the title.”

Backpedalling from the Fox glitterati we sat down to talk with Tim two weeks previously at the Grand Prix of the Netherlands at Assen. It was Gajser’s first ‘match point’ and he could have entered the record books across the Dutch sand. It was not meant to be, partly due to some of the pressure that Gariboldi intimidated. An off-track excursion in the second moto provided the only blip on an extraordinary scorecard when he broke the Honda’s throttle cable and DNFed.

The day before we encountered a seemingly relaxed Honda man at his family’s camper in the Assen paddock. Folding out two collapsible chairs we chatted for the better part of 30 minutes and through a discourse that was remarkable similar to a first feature interview in

2014 – Gajser really hadn’t changed that much. Still smiley, thoughtful and easy to laugh even if the subject matter was now much more serious and wide reaching than all the talk of ‘potential’ two summers ago. Again it was easy to forget just how far and how quickly he has sailed...

DBR: Are you aware of the story you’ve made this year?

TG: “I never watched the statistics or paid too much attention to the history but I know the big names like Albertyn, Everts and Tony. It was about keeping the pressure away but I knew that would be difficult the more the season went on. I really tried to keep calm and to ride only like I know.”

DBR: Do you feel that the season has passed in the blink of an eye?

TG: “Actually this year feels like it has gone so quickly. I still remember Qatar really well and the first race that we won and now we are here at the beginning of September. I cannot believe how fast life goes when you are enjoying it. I guess it is unbelievable what we have done in my first year in MXGP but I’m glad we did it.”

DBR: Why has the year gone quickly? Is it

mostly about the fun, like you said?

TG: “I think so. When you are enjoying what you do everyday then it feels like everything goes fast. In fact, the last couple of years have been like that. Even from the 125 days and then straight into the world championship. It is four years now I am in Grands Prix and it goes so quickly. From February until the races stop coming in October – this period passes very fast. I guess it is about loving what you do.”

DBR: So 2015 might have been a bit ‘slower’ than this year. You had moments like that first win at Arco and then big crashes in Holland and the UK that slowed you down...

TG: “Last year was more ‘on the edge’ because there were many ups and downs and it was not a season where you expect to win the title but everything came together in the end. I knew that if Jeffrey was healthy and everything was ‘normal’ then he’d be the champion, but, well, that’s sport and it can turn around. You really never know until the last chequered flag. You have to keep that focus all the way on the goal. Don’t stop the training. Keep going until that last flag.”



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DBR: What about the emotion of being MXGP champion? Can you talk of your experience in MX2?

TG: "Last year was unbelievable but I think this year is more special. Coming into the season I don't think anybody could believe that I could do as well as I have. Maybe only a couple of people. If I'm honest then maybe only my dad!

"From the outside when I was listening, seeing social media and reading that if I made the top 10 in a few races then that would be good then you never forget that. I made almost every podium and for a rookie I think that is pretty unbelievable...even for myself, for Honda after such a long time, my family and Slovenia – everybody."

DBR: Do you feel the extent of the impact you are having?

TG: "When you are young you make some goals for yourself and what you want to achieve in your career and one of those for me was to be world champion in MX2 and last year was unexpected but I was so glad and so happy. I notice the impact in Slovenia because many more people know about or have an interest in the sport and have followed me."

"It is interesting to see how a sport can grow so much and people who know about MXGP can already see the many [Slovenian] fans that travel to the GPs close by like in Arco or Czech Republic. Winter sports is pretty big but it feels like if you ask anyone in a shop 'what is motocross?' or 'who is Tim Gajser?' and they know – it's something special and I feel lucky to be able to grow the sport."

DBR: So can you go to the supermarket incognito?

TG: "Other people are quite shy. You can see them looking and turning around and it's the same when we go places like the swimming pool. They want photos all the time and it is cool to be recognised. It's nice. I'm happy we have come so far but the important thing is to remain the same guy that you were before. I think I am doing that."

DBR: You are lucky to have the family close by but with all the sponsors and attention it must be tricky to stop your head from ballooning... >>



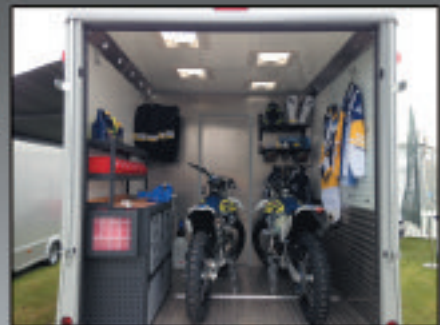
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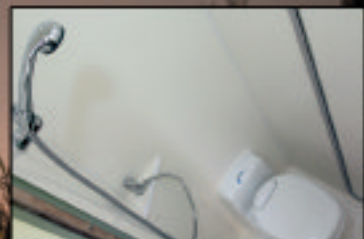
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'The only limitation is your imagination'

TG: "For sure the family help me a lot with that because not only are we close but we also work together. I think you can have big sponsors and partners but in the end you have to keep being the same. I think I am. I speak with everyone, I sign all the posters. So I try...but it is also becoming harder and harder because the fan group is growing and it is difficult to talk with and be with everybody. Sometimes I cannot sign all of the posters...I think they also need to understand that because I'm human and not a robot. I have to take a break between motos."

A bike revs hard nearby. Bogo Gajser is also in action for the Veterans' World Cup at Assen. Heavy paternal influence is nothing new in motocross. There are famously overbearing examples and some horror stories – fathers who have helped their children from a young age and probably sacrificed so much but who simply cannot release their competent offspring into a professional and responsible environment. Bogo comes across as an intense individual and is omnipresent around Tim but the duo have a functional relationship that has evolved with the athlete's success and proficiency.

"Everybody goes on about Tim's dad but his heart is absolutely in the right place," believes Harvey, who needed to manage how HRC has accommodated the family dynamic. "He has the passion and with Tim he has a lot of knowledge. He can tell what Tim wants and what he

wants from his bike. Also the upbringing he's given Tim means that he keeps his feet on the ground. You can go into the Gariboldi tent and Tim will be there sitting on his own. It's like he is one of the boys – very humble. Bogo is a different kettle of fish but the whole family is involved in his racing and it's been like that since he was little.

"You can go straight to Tim but you can also go to Bogo and the dad will be the first to say when perhaps he hasn't ridden as he could or should and explain why he might have made a mistake," he continues. "And Tim knows – it is quite interesting to see the two of them. Coming from Slovenia nobody knows what they are saying!"

Gariboldi has seen the father-son up close and on a daily basis. It was the Italian's idea to integrate Bogo as part of the technical staff two years ago that helped gel the family within the team. Giacomo believes there could be some change on the horizon. Gajser has been in a first serious relationship in 2016 and his central importance to HRC has now increased to a level where the pressure and responsibility is new territory for the Gajzers.

"The relationship between the team and his dad through the season has changed a little bit and that's normal because Tim is growing and becoming a man," Gariboldi reveals. "He only just turned 20. I think he feels that he needs his dad and together they have done a great job and Tim has arrived to where he is because

they both worked together for all these years but I think the relationship is changing a little bit between the two."

DBR: How have things changed with your dad? He is your trainer, friend, mentor but as the races go on and you build experience do you need him a bit less?

TG: "Like you said he has been a mentor from the time when he put me on the bike and he is still my trainer. I have learned a lot from him and when he talks about lines or something else then I end up seeing that he is still right. Even if I am leading the championship and one of the best riders in the world he still sees some things that I never do."

DBR: An example?

TG: "With the lines. During a race I am pretty good with lines and I change them quite a lot but he'll still find something else where I can be even faster. These things and other small details are really important because the other guys in MXGP are really quick – right through the top 10 – and the competition is really tight. If you don't get a good start and get those lines right away then it is tough to come through the pack. So any advice from him is always welcome and important."

DBR: You mentioned in our other interviews that you talked about working together and ended up making an adjustment. Was that >>





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essential to keep a good relationship?

TG: "For sure. It is not easy that your father is your trainer as well. It is very tough. Many times we don't have the same opinion but also many times we come together on the same line and find the best way together. That was the key... so it was important we had that conversation because I was able to trust him even more."

DBR: You seem very placid...whereas he appears to be the opposite! Anxious, nervy and focussed...are you more like your mother in terms of your character?

TG: "Actually I'm more like my dad. My mum and dad divorced – and I think I am like him but he talks much louder! We both love motocross and we both give everything to live our lives this way and live our dreams. So I think we are similar but he talks fast...and loudly."

DBR: What about your girlfriend? From seeing social media she is clearly a big part of your life...

TG: "I think that part of your life is really important. Until December last year almost all of what I knew was just about motocross. We started dating around Christmas when I was on holidays and not training. From Christmas until New Year I took a one-and-a-half week break and didn't work at all. My dad said 'take a rest...it will be a long season' and I was free for a little bit."

"So we met and immediately you can feel if you have a connection with a person and until

now it has been unbelievable and I'm really happy we found each other. We met through Snapchat! And she asked if I wanted a drink and three times I said 'no, I don't have any time, I have to train' and after the third time I gave in and we spent all evening together. She comes from a town 20km from my house."

DBR: So how will things change for you in the future in terms of living, going to the States, sharing your life?

TG: "I like the challenges life brings and even going out to find new ones. I'm really happy right now and I think that is also key to good results. I think happiness brings extra motivation and from the people you have around you. It is perhaps more important that anything else. If you are not happy in your environment then it will affect what you are doing."

DBR: So what is the next goal for happiness away from the track? A new house? A new car?

TG: "I'm not a guy who runs out and buys things. For sure I want to make my own life as well. I'm not thinking too much about it at the moment though."

DBR: Where do you live at the moment then?

TG: "I share an apartment with my brother and I have a gym as well. Times are changing though. We are not kids anymore and we're growing up and my family understands that and sees that I am happy. It is also what I expect

from them because they were also young as well and they found love and know what it is all about."

DBR: Would you want to change anything? Would you always want to be based in Slovenia or would somewhere like Monaco come calling?

TG: "If I am honest then I would always prefer to live in Slovenia. I want to be there. I'm not too sure where yet but it was the country where I was born and where I have lived all my life. I think you have everything there – the lakes, the Alps, a little bit of the sea. You have a little bit of everything."

DBR: Are you as fast on the skis or snowboard as a motocross bike?

TG: "I'm not too bad on the skis but it has a few years now since I've done it before I haven't had enough time. I was even skiing competitively at one point. It was good but when you start becoming a professional in something else then you tend to drop other sports."

DBR: You are so strong on the 450 and throw it around like a BMX so can you tell a small secret about your training? Are you doing something like biathlon and using the mountains?

TG: "Haha! Everything is in the head. If I tell you right now then everybody will know!"

DBR: A small example...

TG: "For motocross you need everything >>

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The MXGP title was eventually won by Gajser at Charlotte



and I don't think there are many sports like it. In football you need the legs, the condition and the judgement but motocross is much more because you have to combine this with co-ordination and ability, good cardio. It is such a strong mix. You have to have a really good programme...[smiles] what I can say is that riding a motorbike every day is not necessary."

DBR: Are you a little afraid of being world champion at 19 years of age? You will have done it all...

TG: "Not really afraid but it does feel like you have met all of your goals already...and you are just 19. You have done everything in Europe. I have been 65, 85, 125 champion. MX2 last year and now MXGP. I am not a guy who wants records or 10 world titles but doing supercross is one of my dreams and plans for the future. If I go to the US at the age of 20...I don't know. It will be difficult but I will be happy to try."

DBR: If I took the bike away and said you could

not race anymore what other goal would you have?

TG: "That's something I haven't really thought about. You've surprised me with that question. At 19 years old I think I have a couple of good years in motocross! I don't have the feeling that I want or could change my job. You have to be so focussed to do this and, perhaps more importantly, really motivated. That's the thing that is tough – to keep motivated all the time. In every sport you have ups-and-downs and when you have ups – winning GPs all the time or races quite easily – then you are always motivated. When it goes to the other side and the 'downs' come then you have to be even more motivated and that's the hard part. That's tough. I think I am quite good with that."

DBR: But you haven't had that many 'downs'...

TG: "I have had my moments! Thailand last year, Valkenswaard as well! [He was denied a second moto start in Thailand due to treatment for dehydration and suffered a big practice

crash in Holland]. Also Lommel this year and my mistake in the first race before going the complete opposite in the second race."

DBR: Well, that must have been a low moment of 30 minutes...

TG: "Yes but you don't know what it felt like to be so disappointed like that. I went to the camper to find some peace and say to myself 'you need to change something'. It is not easy to keep motivated but I managed to find 'something'."

DBR: Lastly is Qatar still one of the most emotional moments of 2016? There have been so many podiums and wins...

TG: "Yeah, it was one of the most emotional for me. One of the best wins of my career. I came to Qatar to show the whole motocross world.... it was just amazing and not many expected me to do so well. I think the GPs in Italy – Arco and Mantova – and winning in front of so many Slovenian fans was special. Every



win is special."

DBR: I think you might have been lying in Qatar pre-race when you said to us you didn't know where you'd be in the pack...

TG: "Why? In all the interviews I made before Qatar I did not want to be 'loud'. I didn't want to say a lot...I wanted to show it. I think the guys that talk a lot are perhaps not so good. I thought 'let the people talk what they want...I will come on the track and show them'."

Gajser took possession of his FIM gold medal on the podium at Glen Helen. It was the crowning moment of a season that will not slow. Motocross of Nations duty (where individual glory is the best he can hope for), SMX Riders Cup, Monster Energy Cup (the first time an MXGP champion will try the Las Vegas

showpiece) and the final round of the All-Japan Championship in Sugo means a very busy October for Gajser. Then there will be time to pause for reflection and to work out how to try and replicate 2016 in MXGP next year.

"There are one or two areas that I'd like to see him improve or get better but that is a decision between him and Bogo and to do with his riding," says Harvey. "Just little things. I think his patience sometimes in a race is that of a 19-year-old! On the technical side the Japanese are very pleased with his feedback and he gets his bike how he wants it and doesn't change it that much.

"He loves riding," he adds. "When you go to a test and do the work and then say 'okay, test finished' we get a long face because he wants to ride more. He just loves riding motorbikes." Gajser made the unexpected and late switch to MXGP at the end of 2015 even after having

made a public statement at Lommel and the Belgian GP last summer that he would stay in MX2 this year. The decision was pushed through after winning MX2 at the final round.

Tim has openly stated his desire to try supercross but has time on his side and recently intimated to HRC that he would be willing to stay in MXGP for the foreseeable future. Fortunately for Gajser and his future goals Jeffrey Herlings' long-awaited graduation in 2017 means a fresh test.

"I think he would like to ride one day in the US but we discussed with him and the family in Lommel and they decided they would stay in Europe until the end of the contract and then maybe move to the US," said Gariboldi. "Next year will be a tough season because Jeffrey is moving to the MXGP class and he will have another challenge – I think he will want to show that he can beat Jeffrey."

2016 M X O N



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"I didn't realise that we had won when I passed Tommy Searle on the final lap – I just saw the sign very quickly that we were in second place. It's a great feeling to win again. I was riding like at the beginning of the season this weekend and to start Sunday with a win was unbelievable."



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Photos by Ray Archer

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The intrepid trio returned to the scene some 30 years later as guests of honour for the 70th edition of this global team scrap. And what they – and more or less the entire motocross community – witnessed on race day absolutely blew away everything else ever seen before.

If you're not already well aware of who won then we're gonna ruin it for you right now – it was Team France. Actually let's back up a bit. Romain Febvre

won it for Team France. That 'fact' is based on his inability to settle for position in the third and final moto of the day where he charged from ninth on lap one to fourth at the finish, passing Tommy Searle on the very last tour to put the French ahead – the first time they'd topped the team standings all day long!

It was the Belgians who led after race one with Kevin Strijbos third and Jeremy van Horebeek managing fifth on the MX2 machine. Their combined score of eight put them well clear of America on 13 and France with 15.

Individual honours in the opening encounter went the way of Febvre who motored passed home favourite Tony Cairoli to take the lead on lap five after starting fourth. Strijbos edged out Team USA's Cooper Webb for third while The Jerre clinched fifth some four places ahead of his nearest place classmate Alex Martin in ninth.

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QUOTE, UNQUOTE! BENOIT PATUREL

"For me the experience here was great and I want to thank my team-mates and the mechanics for preparing the bike this week. All season we worked together with Jacky Vimond my trainer and the mechanics to improve in MX2 and to get better. Today was a good day for me and a great day for France."



MX2 pilot Max Anstie 18th and Tommy Searle 22nd after nailing a stationary rider on lap one. Martin Barr was Ireland's only starter eventually finishing 27th as Graeme Irwin sat out all of Sunday's action after dislocating his shoulder on Saturday.

Team USA headed the way after race two as Jason Anderson claimed an outstanding moto victory. However, El Hombre's victory celebrations lasted all of a few seconds before Japanese lapper Chihiro Notsuka scored a direct hit atop his noggin, knocking him to the floor and out of race three all before race runner-up Jeffrey Herlings had crossed the finish line. Bonkers.

Gautier Paulin placed third for the defending champs as Arnaud Tonus (Switzerland) and Aussie Dean Ferris rounded out the top five with Shaun Simpson sixth. Van Horebeek was top MX2 pilot in seventh while Jeremy Seewer chased him home eighth with Martin ninth.

In the team classification the Yanks led on 23 with France second on 28 and the Swiss third a further eight points back. The Netherlands (42), Italy (46) and Belgium (54) rounded out the top six with us Brits best of the rest in seventh place with 68.

QUOTE, UNQUOTE! GAUTIER PAULIN

"I am so happy for the whole team today with this result – with my team-mates Romain and Benoit. It really is a team effort and without everyone we couldn't make it. The crowd were again just incredible today – you can never believe how many people follow us all over the world so I also want to thank them for all their support. My first race was good today but in the second I didn't make the start and then got stuck in the pack. But the result today is just amazing and to win again is amazing – now we can enjoy the experience of going three in a row."



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QUOTE, UNQUOTE! JEFFREY HERLINGS

"To go 1-2-1 in the qualifying and the two races is very good and I think I showed here I was one of the fastest all weekend. I showed a lot of speed so I'm very pleased about that and it's good feedback for next season. We need that because it will be our rookie season. We only spent four days on the bike so far, so to go 1-2-1 here I think is already pretty amazing."



Tommy Searle, Neil Prince (Team Manager), Shaun Simpson and Max Anstie are Team GB

points racked up so far.

With five scores from six to count the pressure on Cooper Webb's shoulders entering race three must have been immense as no matter how good or bad his ride he knew it'd have to count towards the team's overall score as Anderson was still sat in hospital with little birds tweeting round his head.

Herlings edged Searle out for the third race holeshot and with Coldenhoff fourth this suddenly put the Dutch in front of the team contest as Webb floundered in fifth before being demoted another place by a hard charging Strijbos.

At the halfway point of the moto the Dutch had a two point advantage over the US who had a two point buffer over the French. Febvre meanwhile was stuck behind Webb who was trying everything he could to make a move on Coldenhoff.

Webb eventually made a pass stick on lap 10 to even the team scores at the front. Febvre followed him a lap later although he knew that he not only had to pass Webb but also put another rider between them to make any real difference to the result.

For the next five laps they held position line astern – Herlings led ahead of Cairoli, Strijbos, Searle, Webb and Febvre – with

the Dutch and US still tied on points. Then on lap 16 it all changed as Webb slipped off in his pursuit of Searle and lost four positions before remounting. With America out of contention it was now between the Dutch and Team France for the win.

Entering the last lap it was all square. Herlings could do no more than finish first and although Coldenhoff had Russia's Evgeny Bobryshev in his sights and Gautier Paulin could see Jose Butron ahead, it was unlikely that either would suddenly find any extra pace at this stage of proceedings. So it was all down to Febvre and his inability to roll over...

As TV fans at home watched Herlings, Cairoli and then Strijbos cross the line, Febvre struck, passing Searle to grab fourth at the finish. Now all eyes rested on Paulin – if he could hold position the French team would grab victory by a single point.

With the entire crowd on tenterhooks (Youthstream's weekend figure was 85,000!) it took another 20 seconds to play out with Butron ninth, Webb 10th and finally the factory Honda of the Frenchman crossing the line in 11th.

The French were MXoN champions for the third year in a row!



FIGHTING IRISH!

Kings of the B-Final...

Team Ireland's chances of making it into the main event took a turn for the worse on Saturday morning when Graeme Irwin dislocated his shoulder on the second lap of practice. Unable to ride for the remainder of the day it was up to his team-mates – Martin Barr and Stuart Edmonds – to represent the white, gold and green in the afternoon qualifiers. Unfortunately, despite Edmonds fighting to 18th in the Open Class and MX2 pilot Barr scrapping to 21st the plucky pair failed to make the cut.

However, on Sunday morning the Irish did what the Irish do best and with a little luck on their side for the first time all weekend managed to pull it out of the bag and win the B Final for about the bazillionth time – actually, it's only five times in the last decade but you get where we're coming from!

With five scores to count – and the team only



able to post four with just two riders – they were always going to be in for a kicking in the overall classification but they cracked on regardless. Barr managed to go 26-27 for 11th overall in MX2 while Edmonds ran 27-34 for 16th in the Open class.

And that'd have been a pretty good way for Stuart to end his weekend if somebody hadn't stolen his team helmet and a couple of race shirts...



QUOTE, UNQUOTE! GLENN COLDENHOFF

"There were many strong teams here and many that could make the podium. Yesterday I didn't feel so good and made a lot of mistakes but we qualified third so that was a real confidence boost. I took the holeshot in my first race but as the race went on I got some arm pump. I had a good start again in my second race and I felt better but I still made some mistakes. In the end we got second and I'm happy with that."

QUOTE, UNQUOTE!

COOPER WEBB

"I'm proud of the way we turned things around from Saturday. We struggled a bit with qualifying and getting used to the track here but we raced really well on Sunday. The crowd here in the Motocross of Nations is so amazing and it's a great feeling out there to race for them and hear their support. But it's going to take a long time to get over what happened in the race today and I'm really crushed to go out like I did."

ALEX MARTIN

"We were in the hunt down to the last lap today and it's no secret that we had a lot of adversity. But it's a really cool event to be part of and have two top 10 finishes today. Congratulations to Team France and Team Netherlands – this was a great weekend and I'm proud to take part in it."

JASON ANDERSON

"I was really excited coming to this race to represent the US. After posting the fastest time in free practice I had a bit of bad luck in qualifying. I got hit from behind in the first turn and ended up hurting my leg. I decided to race on Sunday despite this injury. My first race went pretty well from the get go. I got the holeshot and started pulling away from the field. Midway through the race Herlings caught up and we had a pretty good battle for a couple of laps before he went down. After that I was just coasting to the finish to get the win. I was really excited to cross the line first but right after that I felt another bike landing on me. We've got everything checked out and I'm going to be okay. It's just a bit of a bummer I couldn't get out there in the last moto to help Team USA battle for the win."

TOMMY SEARLE

"Luck just wasn't on my side in the first race. I surrendered our team's best gate to my team-mate so I was in the pack but on the first lap some guy just stopped dead at the bottom of a hill and I hit him flat out. The bars were bent and I banged my right forearm so I couldn't attack. I timed my start perfectly in the second race and could race top four easily all moto. Febvre dived inside me at the last corner and I could have stopped him but our team had a pretty unhappy weekend and he was going for the Nations so it would have been unfair to block him."

MAX ANSTIE

"It was nice to take part at the Motocross of Nations this year. Racing on the same track with the guys on the 450s makes the starts crucially important. To be honest I was a bit nervous coming into the races as I didn't know exactly what to expect. I didn't manage to get a good start in either of my two motos and that made things a lot harder for me. I did my best to help Team Great Britain but it just wasn't meant to be."

SHAUN SIMPSON

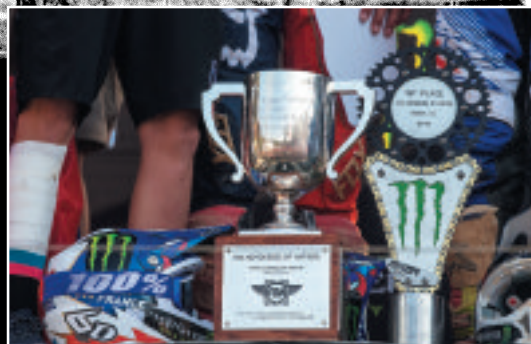
"It was nice to have a great first race and if I could have passed Van Horebeek then I feel I could have gone a bit. I felt like I was riding well and my lap times were coming down all the time. The second race was a wrench. I had the outside gate pick which I couldn't complain about too much because there were holeshots coming from there all weekend but I never made it work for me. I made a few good moves in the first turns but then [Pritt] Ratsep went down in front of me and I got tangled up with him. I was outside the top 30 and managed to get up to around 20th after two laps and I felt strong and I could have charged on. I knew the track and was moving forward but it was all in vein when the chain came off – the second time in three years. Bit of a shame really to finish the weekend on a bum note. I'll try and take the positives and I don't think it would have changed the outlook much for Team GB."



Ricky Johnson, David Bailey and Johnny O'Mara return to Maggiora 30 years after they first came, saw and conquered



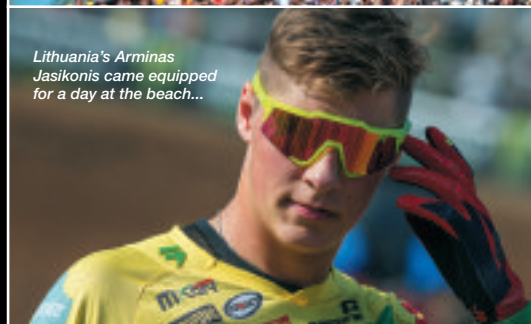
It's a deal, it's a steal, it's
the sale of the century...



Alex Martin does his
bit for Team America



Lithuania's Arminas
Jasikonis came equipped
for a day at the beach...



RESULTS

MXoN Overall Classification

| | | |
|----|-----------------|-----|
| 1 | France | 29 |
| 2 | The Netherlands | 30 |
| 3 | USA | 33 |
| 4 | Belgium | 36 |
| 5 | Italy | 44 |
| 6 | Switzerland | 44 |
| 7 | Great Britain | 73 |
| 20 | Ireland | 114 |

MXGP Individual

| | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------|---------|
| 1 | Tony Cairoli | Italy | 2+2=4 |
| 2 | Romain Febvre | France | 1+4=5 |
| 3 | Kevin Strijbos | Belgium | 3+3=6 |
| 4 | Glenn Coldenhoff | Netherlands | 6+7=13 |
| 5 | Cooper Webb | USA | 4+10=14 |
| 9 | Tommy Searle | GB | 22+5=27 |

MX2 Individual

| | | | |
|----|---------------------|-------------|----------|
| 1 | Jeremy van Horebeek | Belgium | 5+7=12 |
| 2 | Alex Martin | USA | 9+9=18 |
| 3 | Jeremy Seewer | Switzerland | 11+8=19 |
| 4 | Benoit Paturel | France | 14+10=24 |
| 5 | Samuele Bernardini | Italy | 16+15=31 |
| 10 | Max Anstie | GB | 18+22=40 |
| 11 | Martin Barr | Ireland | 27+26=53 |

Open Individual

| | | | |
|----|------------------|-------------|----------|
| 1 | Jeffrey Herlings | Netherlands | 2+1=3 |
| 2 | Arnaud Tonus | Switzerland | 4+8=12 |
| 3 | Gautier Paulin | France | 3+11=14 |
| 4 | Dean Ferris | Australia | 5+15=20 |
| 5 | Evgeny Bobryshev | Russia | 17+6=23 |
| 6 | Shaun Simpson | GB | 6+38=44 |
| 16 | Stuart Edmonds | Ireland | 27+34=61 |





Stefan's STEEDS!

RADICAL RYAN HOUGHTON RIDES, RATES N' WRITES ABOUT THE FACTORY SUZUKIS OR BEN TOWNLEY AND JEREMY SEEWER...

Words by **Ryan Houghton** Photos by **Ray Archer**

It's that wonderful time of the year again and no, I'm not bloody talking about Christmas – it's factory bike test time! Towards the end of the season the factories release their machines for the fearless magazine test fraternity to give a good going over. It's a tough job but fortunately for you DBR readers I am willing to take on the challenge and give you an idea what it's like to handle these gorgeous machines.

First out of the gate this season were Suzuki who now have the one and only Stefan Everts overseeing their factory race team. Stefan will be forever linked with the Hamamatsu brand after winning his first world title for them way back in 1991 on their world beating 125cc two-stroke. Everts could've won the 250cc title in 1992 n'all but for injury then left the Bieffe squad at the end of 1993 before winning all and sundry for all the other Japanese factories in his legendary career.

Now coming full circle Stefan is attempting to get Suzuki back to their old winning ways. Believe it or not the brand has not won a world

title since four-strokes came back to the fore. In fact, you have to go all the way back to 2002 and the frenetic days of Mickael Pichion and his glorious Coróna RM250 two-popper to see the Suzuki name proudly atop of the world championship standings.

Although the 2016 factory team may not have the absolute star names astride its bikes as Kevin Strijbos proved in Lommel and Jeremy Seewer has done several times throughout the year there ain't much wrong with the equipment.

So to start off let's get to grips with the machine that finished second in the world behind Jeffrey Herlings' KTM. What a machine the RM-Z250 is – I was really shocked how much I loved riding it.

Jeremy is quite a small guy compared to me so it's probably not surprising to learn that I thought his bike has a really soft set-up. The front is fairly soft but you really noticed it at the back. When I first sat on it I was like 'man I'm really gonna hate riding this' but that wasn't the case at all.

I couldn't believe how well you could push >>

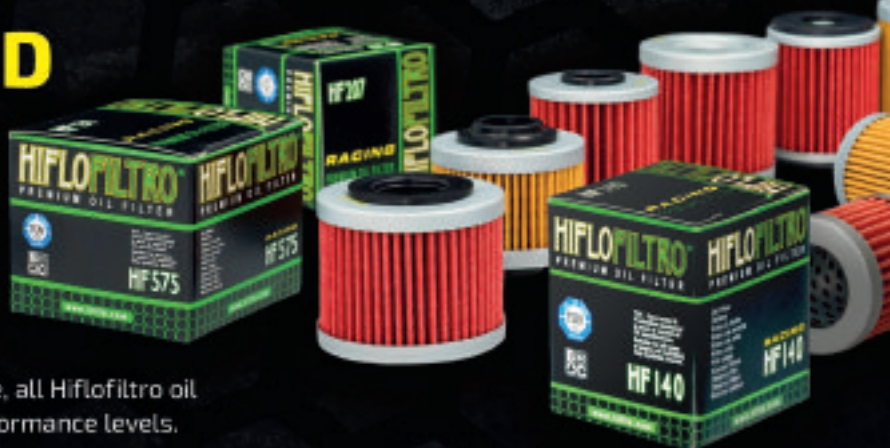
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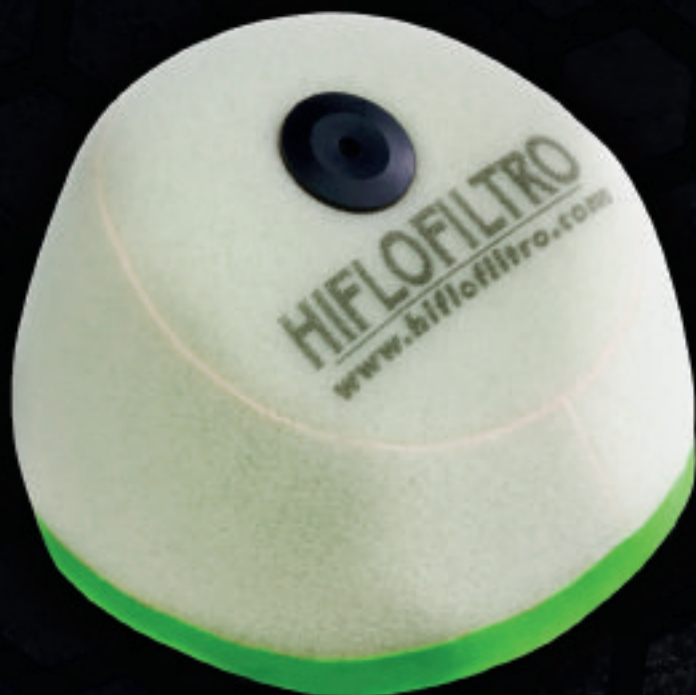


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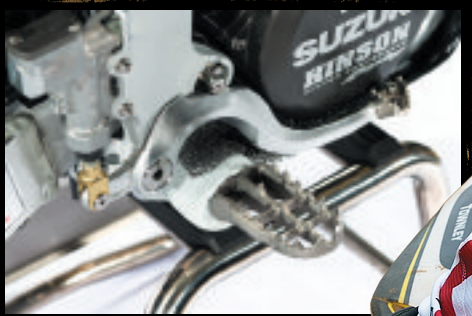
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the front end into the corners under braking. It was genuinely the most trustworthy bike I have ever ridden! When you watch the GP boys ride they do make stuff look extremely easy and of course they are amazingly talented riders. The key to that is their set-up. The set-up they run is so good and makes you feel so comfortable it enables you to push harder than you ever thought you could.

That KYB factory stuff certainly works on the 250 Suzuki! The forks gave me great feeling on the front end and I was at the bottom of the stroke on the forks and you wouldn't believe how much the rear end squatted down. There was a pretty big double at the track and I was having trouble getting it on the 250 but I stopped and watched Seewer while he was riding and he was hitting it and seat bouncing really hard. Naturally I had to have a go so I tried it expecting to have a rear end kick out of it but I had nothing...zip. I cleared it pretty easily. I wouldn't even feel confident doing it

with my own suspension but I got great confidence out of the rear shock on the 250. Genuinely impressive stuff.

The test was held in a massive quarry in Belgium called Mont-Saint-Guilbert. They normally hold a round of the Belgian championship there once a year and apart from that it's just a working quarry. >>



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Jeremy Seewer's 250
ain't short on power



Half the track is on the side of a clay/sand hill and the rest is laid out on bottomless orange sand.

I think Stefan is pretty tight with the owner so he rides there a lot, especially during the winter when everywhere is closed they can always ride here as the sand is so deep.

Just as a side note you'd like to think Everts was the ultimate professional but the test was conducted just after they had signed Jasikonis and Stefan forgot his boots. As it turned out he ended up using my boots for half the day. That took the piss a bit really because all I wanted to do was ride the bikes all day!


With the motor I was really surprised as well. I rode Herlings' KTM and Kullas' Husky factory bikes last year and I can tell you that they were special bits of kit and I wasn't expecting the Suzuki to be as good

as it was. Proves that you should always have an open mind I guess.

I would say that the Suzuki matched them for torque and bottom-end power. It was seriously impressive even with my 90kg ass on it! The only place the KTM edged it out was on RPMs – the Suzuki didn't rev quite as much.

I was speaking to Everts and he was telling me they are developing the 250 a lot. Stefan and Steve Ramon (2007 MX1 champ) were both there when we were riding testing new parts for Seewer and Bas Vaesen to try out so it shows how much work the yellow factory is chucking at improving their machines.

With Kevin Strijbos' bike still in regular action when we conducted this test I only got to ride Ben Townley's 450 on the day but I can tell you that it was the fastest bike I have ridden in my life. Townley has >>

A high-action photograph of a motocross rider in mid-turn, splashing through a deep rut of brown mud. The rider is wearing a white and red racing suit, black boots, and a blue and white helmet with a red star. The Suzuki motorcycle is yellow and black, with the number 45 visible on the front fender. The rider's body is angled into the turn, and the bike is kicking up a large cloud of mud.

*Ryan reckons good set-up
is what makes these factory
Suzukis so special*

his power in the bottom to mid rev range and the Suzuki just has unlimited amount of torque. When I came off the first session Stefan asked me what I thought and all I could say was 'it's bloody fast mate'.

It sounds silly to say about a factory bike but it's true – in the right hands that bike is a rocket. Everts added that it's all about riding the bike in the correct power-band and without saying as much I think he was inferring to the fact that he won 10 world titles and never over-revved his bike once.

It is all about throttle control and that's so true. You try riding that bike at full throttle for a 35-minute moto and you're going to be hanging out your arse no word of a lie.

As I said only got to thrash BT's 450 but I asked Stefan how does Strijbos have his

engine and he said he likes all the power at the top which really surprised me as he is so smooth and never really revs a bike too much. Of course these GP bikes have to be fast. The start is important at any race but at a GP if you start mid-pack you have no chance of coming through the pack with a field that stacked!

Townley's suspension was really stiff – especially on the front. The track was on the side of a hill and all the places I was finding it really nice on the 250 I was finding it a little bit nervous and twitchy on the 450.

The bike sits really level so exciting corners with all that power it just didn't squat on the rear. The bike stayed really neutral and I found myself really noticing how much speed I could carry coming out of corners.

The cable clutch is as light as any hydraulic

clutch and the only time I was using it was to control the power when I got a bit throttle happy. The Nissin brakes are really strong but that's what you'd expect on a factory bike!

A lot of people have been asking me lately how special these factory bikes are and all I can say is this. Of course the GP bikes are amazing to ride – as you would expect them to be – but the best part about them is that each bike is so well set-up specifically for the rider.

Every GP bike I have ridden has had its own little tweaks and although they most likely won't suit everybody they certainly suit the professional who has to tear it around for 18 GPs a year. I guarantee if you had your bike set-up to your needs like these babies are then you'd go a damn sight faster on a Sunday afternoon.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS



2016 RM-Z250WS

Engine Type: 4-Stroke water-cooled single
Displacement: 249 cc
Maximum Power: It's a secret – ssshhhh!
Valve Type: DOHC Four-Valve
Fuel System: Fuel Injection
Sparkplug: NGK
Data Acquisition: GET
Lubrication System: Semi Dry Sump
Clutch: Wet Multi Plate Hinson
Transmission: Five Speed Constant Mesh
Exhaust system: Akrapovic
Air cleaner: Twin Air
Final Drive: Chain DID
Frame Type: Twin Spar Aluminium Alloy
Front Suspension: KYB Pneumatic Spring Fork – Inverted Telescopic
Rear Suspension: Link Type KYB
Tyres: Pirelli
Front Wheel: 21 inch
Rear Wheel: 19 inch
Rims: Excel
Front Brake: Single Steel Disc Nissin/Braking
Rear Brake: Single Steel Disc Nissin/Braking
Chain wheel, handlebars & grips: Renthal
Chain: DID
Length: 2170mm
Width: 830mm
Height: 1270mm
Wheelbase: 1475mm
Weight: 98 kg
Fuel Tank: 7 litres
Fuelled with: ETS
Lubricated by: Motul
Plastics by: Polisport
Decals and seat cover by: Blackbird Racing



2016 RM-Z450WS

Engine Type: 4-Stroke water-cooled single
Displacement: 449 cc
Maximum Power: More than most humans can handle
Valve Type: DOHC Four-Valve
Fuel System: Fuel Injection
Sparkplug: NGK
Data Acquisition: GET
Lubrication System: Semi Dry Sump
Clutch: Wet Multi Plate Hinson
Transmission: Five Speed Constant Mesh
Exhaust system: Akrapovic
Air cleaner: Twin Air
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Frame Type: Twin Spar Aluminium Alloy
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Rear Suspension: Link Type KYB
Tyres: Pirelli
Front Wheel: 21 inch
Rear Wheel: 19 inch
Rims: Excel
Front Brake: Single Steel Disc Nissin/Braking
Rear Brake: Single Steel Disc Nissin/Braking
Chain wheel, handlebars & grips: Renthal
Chain: DID
Length: 2185mm
Width: 830mm
Height: 1260mm
Wheelbase: 1480mm
Weight: 102 kg
Fuel Tank: 7 litres
Fuelled with: ETS
Lubricated by: Motul
Plastics by: Polisport
Decals and seat cover by: Blackbird Racing



N O R E G R E T S !

MICK EXTANCE has overcome a series of last-minute hitches to take his place for a second crack at the Dakar Rally.

Extance, the Spendon-based endurance motorcycle ace, set off at dawn today to attend scrutineering in Marouville, before the famous rally starts on New Year's Day.

And after friends and relatives rallied round to fill the funding gap left by the late withdrawal of a five-figure sponsorship deal, the 39-year-old racer declared: "This time it's personal."

That decision, taken a week ago, made it doubtful that the Leeds-based Rally Raid UK team, which Extance is a member, would be able to put their car and motorcycles on the starting grid at all.

Added to that, the team's international racing licences were delayed in Libya and then by the festive period, a problem Extance overcame with a Christmas Eve dash to the licensing body's UK headquarters in Rugby.

Despite these problems, the irrepressible former European Enduro champion believes he has the best chance he will ever get to finish the gruelling race through the deserts of North Africa and secure a good finishing position.

Last year, in what was pretty much a last-minute project, Extance was

Early start as Extance heads for the desert



by Colston Crawford

going well until he was forced to pull out by an electrical fire on his Honda bike just after the halfway stage, only the fact that his shared back-up truck had also broken down stopped him getting on the move again.

This year, the funding problem came together a strong package of back-steps that will include a truck, full of spares as well as a fast car containing four mechanics.

"A lot of people have stretched their legs further than we would have asked and they have made the difference," said Extance.

"Without them, we wouldn't be going

and that gives me even more incentive to do well."

"I can get a good result this time, hopefully it will make the motorcycle industry sit up and take notice of us."

"We know that, once we get the show on the road, we have the right equipment to tackle the rally."

"On top of that, I have a year of experience of the rally under my belt this time and I've worked hard on my personal fitness, because I know what's needed."

"So I don't think I will ever have a better opportunity to do something big in this event."

Extance — as well as Sussex antique dealer Patsy Quick (36), one of the few women taking part — will ride a specially-adapted Honda XR650L bike this year, thanks to backing from local

dealer Pudcock Motorcycles, run by former speedway professional Chris Pudcock.

"Chris has pulled out all the stops to make sure we have plenty of spares to carry and has shown a genuine interest all along," said Extance, who has also been backed up by his brother, Peter, who runs a motorcycle shop in Bournemouth.

He and their mother, Margaret, along with Extance's wife, Sharon, will be flying out for the finish of the event, which this year will be at Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt on January 19.

An old friend of Extance's will be involved all the way along the line. Steve Howyer, who has previously worked as a mechanic for him, has paid his own way to be among the spinner men in the team car.

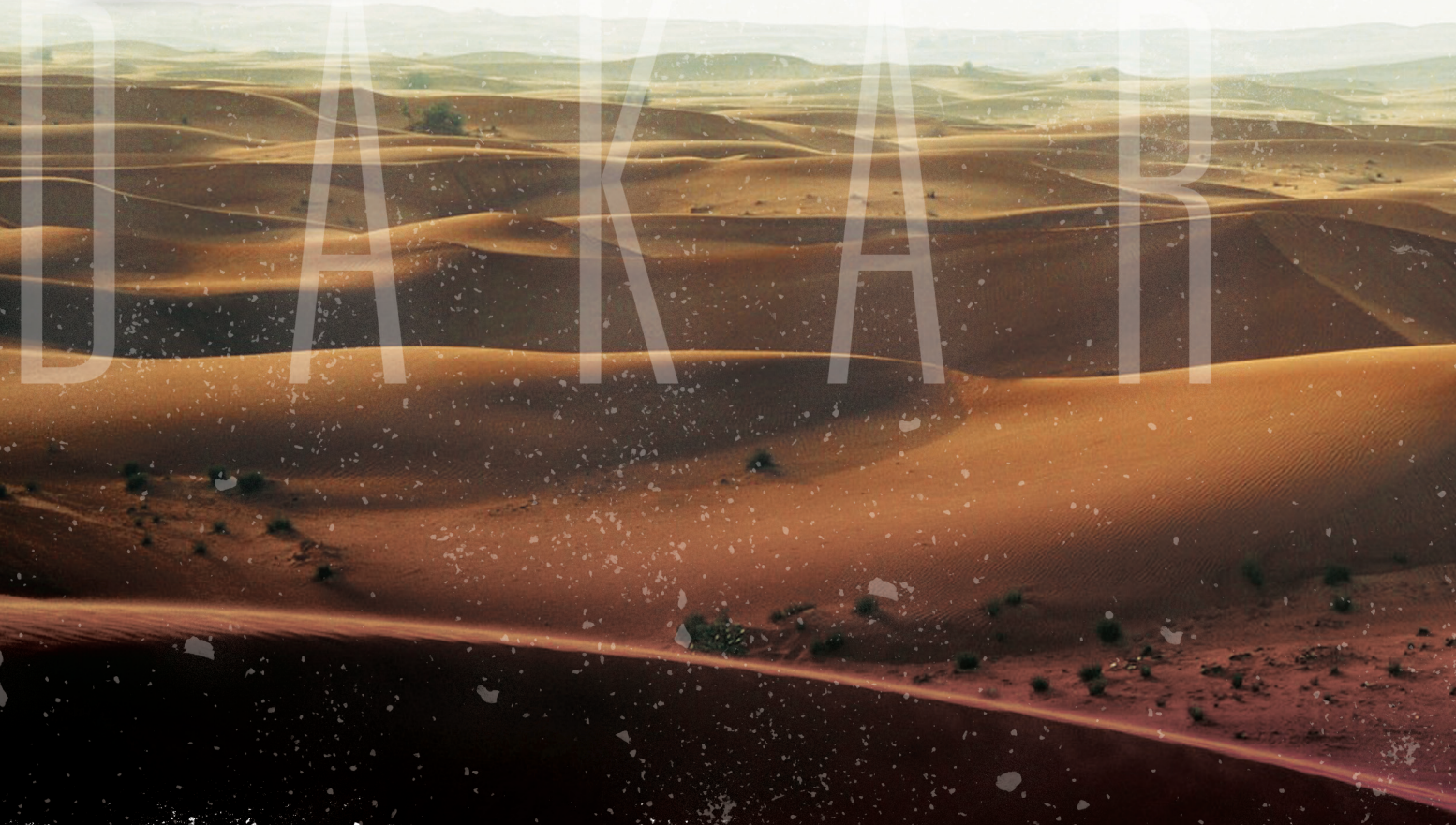
"Last year, he met me at the airport when I came back and his first words were 'you're not going without me next year,'" said Extance.

"With support like that, with my family waiting at the finish and with the way everyone in the Rally Raid team have put themselves out to get on to the start, how can I not do well?"

● Watch out for regular updates on Extance's progress, direct to the Evening Telegraph from the team's back-up vehicle.

CHASING THE DAKAR DREAM COST MICK EXTANCE HIS MARRIAGE, HIS HOME AND A WHOLE HEAP OF CASH BUT BRITAIN'S GREATEST OFF-ROAD ADVENTURER WOULDN'T CHANGE A THING...

Words by Sean Lawless





Mick Extance is an adventurer straight out of the old-school, a Boy's Own sort of bloke who I could easily imagine trekking to the South Pole or climbing Everest or searching for lost Inca gold.

Instead, he chose to take on what's arguably still the biggest two-wheeled motorcycle challenge on the planet – the Dakar Rally – not once but seven times. And he was good at it too. The only British motorcyclist to make it to the end five times, he's finished 26th twice and would possibly have ended the 2009 rally in the top-10 but for a highly questionable penalty.

Over the course of our interview (actually, more a rowdy meal with a bunch of friends than a formal interview) he constantly uses the word 'journey' as a metaphor for life, frequently refers to experiences as being 'crazy' or 'bizarre' and laughs hard and often which, for me at least, pretty much sums him up.

Crazy is maybe too strong a word but Mick's certainly eccentric, his life has definitely been

unconventional and you can't help but get the feeling that he's enjoyed it – and, aged 53, is continuing to enjoy it – to the full.

"My journey started when I was 17," he says, "stood in a pub drinking way too much beer. This crazy race came up on the TV and it made the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. It was the Dakar and I knew straight away that I needed to do it. I stood there in awe."

By the time he got this first taste of the Dakar Rally – or Paris Dakar Rally as it was originally known due its start in the French capital – he was already a fairly seasoned off-road rider.

"I started competing at 15, did trials at British championship level and then I did a bit of motocross but I was never that strong – I didn't have that killer thing – and then, bizarrely, I went to Geraint Jones' enduro school and he told me I should go and do some enduros.

"I did my first enduro which was a British championship round at Thetford and finished second in the Clubman class on the first day and won the second day. I won the Clubman

championship that year and then moved up to the Championship class which was a big step because I never went through the Experts."

It was at a BEC round where he began a friendship that would play a big role in finally inspiring him to fulfil his Dakar dream.

"I was sat at a time check minding my own business and John Deacon rode up to me and asked if I wanted to go to his shop on Monday morning. I'd never even met the guy before but I drove down to Plymouth the next day. He was a TM dealer at the time and he put me on a TM 80 which really suited me – it was an incredible bike.

"He said 'take the bike, ride it for me, do the British championship and let's see how it unfolds' and I won the 80cc championship. John then suggested I do some world rounds."

Deacon was, of course, Britain's first Paris-Dakar hero who won a number of stages and finished as high as sixth in 1999. He was killed in 2001 while contesting the Masters Rally in Syria. >>





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"John was always there to guide me and in my second year in the worlds I finished sixth in the 80cc class which was really, really good and then I got picked to represent Great Britain at Assen in the ISDE on 80cc bike. I was the #1 plate and first man away. It was really scary stuff.

"I got a bit of ribbing for being picked but to be fair I'd done my work, I'd won the British championship, I'd finished sixth in the world. A few people doubted I had the ability but Jock Wilson picked the team and he wanted me in it.

"I took four months off work – at the time I was Tarmac-ing for the electricity board – and absolutely trained my arse off. So I worked really hard, got to Assen and it was like where I trained – just sand – which was incredible. I felt like I was still training and I got a gold medal – it was only me and Paul Eddy [out of the British riders] who got a gold that year – and I was leading the class until two days before the end."

With a factory ride lined up for the 1994 season it looked as though Mick, who'd always conducted his racing on a shoestring, was on the verge of making a breakthrough. Then it all went tits-up...

"TM were going to take me on and I was going to move to Italy and have a full factory ride and then the FIM pulled the 80cc class out of the world championship. So I had to move to a 125 and did two years in the worlds but I couldn't get to where I needed to be. I could get top 10 but I couldn't break the top five which is where you needed to be to get recognised. It was a different journey but it was good because I could still hold my own at world level.

"I was one of those guys who did it out the back of a Transit – I didn't have the money, I just went with a tent. Everything I did I funded myself and that for me is a big part of it – you have to be hungry to do things, it makes you more determined. It's a massive motivator."

Mick then turned his attention to downhill mountainbike racing but the 2001 deaths of his father and Deacon steered him back in the direction of the Dakar.

"John had played such a big part in my journey and when I lost my dad it was a massive thing for me and I knew that I needed to go and do this crazy race that I'd dreamed about



Mick in action in his first ever trial



Mick was first man away at the Assen ISDE on his 80cc TM

since I was 17. I'm a big believer that if you want to do something bad enough then you've got to go and do it. Just get on with it.

"As soon as I got home from the hospital I was on a mission to compete in my first Dakar Rally. For me it was a massive journey because I had the whole normal life and had no money behind me whatsoever but I was so determined to chase this dream. I was just going to keep going until I got there."

When Mick's name appeared on the 2002 starting list he was contacted by Paul Round from Rally Raid UK, a company running support packages for the Dakar.

"I told him if he was chasing me for money he was wasting his time but he was coming to Derby so we met up and I said 'I'll give you everything, everything I've got in me I'll give you to put this dream together because it's a big part of my life but I haven't got a lot of money'.

"He'd always done car packages for the Dakar and wanted to break into the bikes so he came back to me with a list of stuff he could provide and a list of what I needed to provide. I looked at the list and I only needed to get things like a tent so I shook his hand. I was going.

"I left my house for my first Dakar on Christmas Day. I opened my presents with the family in the morning and camped out at Dover waiting for the ferry on Boxing Day. So I hooked up with this crazy race, I didn't know what the hell it was all about. I'd never even done a smaller rally, nothing. My first race was the major one."

Mick had won the Vets class of the European enduro championship which was enough for Husaberg to offer help so for his debut he raced a converted supermoto bike kitted out with various rally bolt-ons but he still had to raise over £20,000

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to compete. And even then he wasn't properly prepared for covering almost 9,500km over 17 days...

"I knew it was going to be hot in Africa but I'd forgotten about all the bit through Europe and it pee'd it down for five days all the way from Paris to southern Spain. I had one coat that was absolutely wet through but I didn't care – I was so excited.

"I'd spent my time going around the world but I'd never been to Africa. It was bizarre. I got off the ferry and there were no street lights and the wind was trying to blow me off the bike as I made my way to the bivouac which was something like 400 clicks down the road. When I hooked up with the first bivouac I didn't have a clue what was happening. I was way out of my league."

During the opening stages Mick was lulled into a false sense of security but once the action moved into the Sahara he realised what he'd let himself in for.

"The first few days of the rally are quite comfortable. I think it was day five before the first proper desert stage and I was thinking 'wicked, that sounds cool' but I'd never ridden in the desert. So I set off and turned into the desert and couldn't believe it – until you've been there you can't comprehend how big it actually is.

"I'd probably done about 50 clicks and there was no traffic around me. I didn't have the rolling road in my book, I didn't have a satellite phone, I had nothing. So I thought I better stop because I honestly didn't know where I was going. So I pulled over, took my crash hat off and just burst into a massive sweat. Then I made that fatal mistake of looking out to see where the other competitors were.

"When you're in that kind of environment the

sand storms blow up so I'd see one of those in one direction and think it was a competitor, then I'd see one in another direction. I knew I had to get out of there quickly because in a minute my head was going to blow and then I'd be in big bother. So I put my helmet back on, went about another 40 clicks in a straight line and came out at the first checkpoint.

"It taught me a massive lesson about the desert – make it small. So I rode into the check, the guy stamped my card and my fear of the desert was starting to go and I was beginning to feel more comfy with it."

Worse was to come for Mick but in true Extance-style he took the leftfield approach and his out-of-the-box thinking kept him in the race.

"Just before the rest day my Husaberg caught fire – I was that knackered at first I tried to blow it out before throwing lots of sand on it which did the trick. Then I saw the Grim Reaper sweeper truck which is the worst sight in the world because when that gets you it's over. So I lay on the floor behind this dune and let it go past.

"I picked my bike up and was trying to will the thing to run again but the wiring was charcoal! Next thing this old truck comes through the desert with some locals on it so I persuaded them to put my bike on the back. One of them thought it would be funny to put my helmet on and the other had my gloves on and it was like they'd convinced themselves they were in the rally.

"It was cool for about half-an-hour but it was only a few months after 9/11 and one of the guys thought I was American and it went from being really funny to a really sombre atmosphere. I started to think about bailing out – the bike was dead anyway and no-one knew where I was – and I was just about



to pull the lever on the door when I looked up and the guys had driven me to the end of the stage. I was still in this crazy rally!”

Mick went on to finish 42nd out of the 245 motorbikes entered and for the next five years he raced a selection of Hondas ranging from XR650s to more suitable converted CRF450Xs. Then came the hammer blow before the start of the 2008 rally that signalled the beginning of the end of his love affair with the Dakar.

“We were in a big square in Lisbon and they basically made an announcement to say the rally had been cancelled and could we all make our way home. It took me for £20,000 and had a massive impact because I’d started to get Honda a bit interested. When it got cancelled Honda had sent in a representative to look into the rally and see what it was all about.

“I’d also just picked up a major sponsor –

Optoma Loans – through a guy called Andrew Seymour who had organised for a lot of the big lenders to come out for the start and to watch this big carnival. These guys were on their way and then the rally got cancelled which was a massive heartbreak for me because the following year there was going to be some big investments into me and life would have become a bit easier.”

The official line was that the cancellation was because the organisers couldn’t guarantee competitors’ safety in Mauritania although there is a school of thought that the big bucks on offer in South America were already beckoning.

Mick’s final Dakar was in 2009 – the rally’s first visit to South America – but for him the change of continent had taken away its magic.

“I’m not the fastest racer but put me in a survival situation and I’ll come out the other

side. You’ve got to be a good man to sink me and that’s what I like about the Dakar Rally – the more survival came in, the more I came alive. The whole environment suited me – no matter how hard the day I wouldn’t let it break me. That’s what you need.

“The first year in South America was like a WRC stage – it was nowhere near technical enough, incredibly dusty and ridiculously fast. To me not what the Dakar was about. You only had to shut the throttle and someone would pass you.”

Riding for Honda Europe but still largely self-funded, despite the WFO going Mick was heading for his best-ever finish until he picked up a penalty for missing an electronic beacon that he maintains was incorrectly positioned.

“Three days before the finish I was running 13th overall which was the whole reason to go,



GOING DOWNHILL

Mick’s mountainbike mission

“I used to train a lot on a mountainbike and my mate Alan Blood was doing it so I went practising with him.

“I lived in Ilkeston at the time and there was a pushbike shop so I walked in – I had no money to buy a bike – and said to the guy ‘sponsor me on that bike and I’ll win you the British championship’. I’d never been in before and he must have thought I was a nutter but I left him my number and a couple of days later he phoned me up and offered me a bike for a year.

“I went to Peebles in Scotland for the first British championship round and finished third in the Masters class. There was also a one-day national championship. I picked up the guy who’d lent me the bike and was driving down feeling the pressure knowing I had to perform.

“I was last man down the run and the man before me was Alan who was my big rival. I was sat at the top of the run and heard a big cheer so I knew Alan had had a good one and I ended up beating him by .04 of a second and taking the title.

“The guy who’d lent me the bike had tears in his eyes. This crazy guy had walked in his shop, pulled the strings and won the British Masters championship. That’s how I work – just put everything on the line and do it.”





to be in the top 20. When they put that penalty on me – and it wasn't just me, they gave it to a lot of competitors – it took me down from 13th to 32nd which was a massive thing to stomach two days before the end of the rally. But it's a rally. You've got to accept the rules and they're the organisers and they do things like that – it happens all the time. Is it fair? Probably not.

"The next day I started to climb back up and got to 27th but to me that was still a bad result because my previous finish had been 26th. I didn't want to go back and do worse. The morning of the last day the boss from Honda Europe could see the anger in my eyes – we had two timed stages and I've probably never ridden as hard in my life. I was on the edge."

Mick's final assault elevated him to 26th but the experience had left a bad taste in his mouth.

"It was good but not what I wanted. It wasn't

a disgrace but it wasn't top 20. I'd worked my arse off and climbed back up to 26th which is where I'd finished in 2006. Was it okay? No, top 20 was what I set out to do."

Even now, over seven years later, the sense of injustice still burns bright – understandable when you consider the sacrifices Mick made to chase his Dakar dream for eight years across three continents.

"I lost everything. I lost my house – it was remortgaged twice and then repossessed – and I lost my wife. They took my car off the drive. Do I regret it? No. I wouldn't change it for anything. It was a massive journey. I'm very lucky. I chased the dream and I'm very honoured and privileged to say I did it. I had an incredible journey and I absolutely loved every minute of it."

These days you can find Mick leading groups of students along fire roads in the hills

above Llangynog where he runs his successful Bridgestone-backed Mick Extance Off-Road Experience. The Dakar's still very much in his heart but he's forged a new life in North Wales where he can ride every day and channel his spirit of adventure into something which actually pays the bills instead of generating them.

"Every day it's in my head. I would never say that's the end of it. The challenge would be to do it before I'm 60. I had an opportunity to do it a few years ago with Kawasaki but it was not the right thing to do because of my business."

"The school's great. I love the school. Every day I drive it like I drove the Dakar Rally and that's how I've always worked. I put the same enthusiasm into the school as I did the Dakar Rally and I get to live in an incredible part of Wales. I'm incredibly lucky to have what I've got."



**GET YOUR BIKE
LOOKING GOOD
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DAN GROVE'S
BIKE CLEANING
MASTER CLASS...**

Words and photos by Dan Grove

Mr

Shine!



THE ESSENTIALS...

Before you get started you're going to need a few things –

Pressure washer

I'm using a Karcher K4 Full Control and have been for a little while now. It even has a LED display showing how strong the spray is! You change the pressure by twisting the lance – it's pretty handy.

Bike cleaner

Putline Put Off is my choice of cleaner but there are plenty of amazing products out there on the market...

Water displacement spray

Again, there are a stack of awesome products on the market but I use Putline 1001 and I also using their Silicon Spray and Anti Corrosion spray too. As well as this you'll also need –

- A mud scraper
- An exhaust bung
- An airbox washing cover
- A scouring pad
- A few rags
- A few brushes of different sizes and shapes
- A car washing sponge
- An old sock (preferably not crusty)

Over the years quite a few people have mentioned to me how clean my bike is when I wheel it out of the van. I don't have any secrets as to how I keep it clean as I've seen people using similar techniques but there are a few people out there that just need to spend a little more time during their bike washing that will benefit them massively when it comes to selling the bike or when taking on some midweek maintenance.

So, here's my dirt bike washing guide. If you follow the same steps already then I guess we're on the same page but if not, have a read and get down your local hardware store for a few of the bits listed below to have the cleanest bike in the pits...

STEP 1

Remove the seat, sump guard (if you have one) and air filter and then replace the filter with the wash cover. Stick your bung in the exhaust as well at this point and reinstall the seat bolts and nip them up a little to stop the side panels flapping around when you start washing.

STEP 2

If you've just raced a complete mudder you need to get busy with your mud scraper cause if you try and wash off a few inches of mud with a pressure washer you'll be there

for ages and make an even bigger mess. If your bike is just 'roosted' with no mud stuck to it but it's just dirty lean the bike over so that the bottom triple clamp rests on the corner of your bike stand.

STEP 3

Switch on your washer and get to work! As you can see the underside of the bike you'll get it much cleaner than if you washed it just on the stand. You can also clean the radiator louvres on the lower side of the bike without flattening the radiator fins as you're spraying across the plastic.

Spray your cleaner on the underside areas, the swingarm, engine, linkage, tyres, frame and fork feet. While the cleaner is breaking down the dirt blast off your sump guard and your boots. Spray cleaner on these then grab your brushes to agitate and lather up the cleaner on the bike. Once it's all soapy, rinse it off.

STEP 4

Lift your bike up and lean it on its other side and repeat the first parts of Step 3. While the cleaner is doing its magic – and before you use your brushes on the bikes opposite underside – agitate the dirt on your sump guard and boots with your brush and then a sponge so that you don't miss any dirt and then rinse off. Agitate the dirt on the >>>

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underside of the bike and rinse off your bike, sump guard and boots.

STEP 5

Lift your bike up and place on the stand. Grab an old sock and rightly wrap it around the castle nut below the top triple clamp. The sock helps to prevent water entering the steering bearings and for those that have ever replaced these bearings will no doubt be heading upstairs for an old sock that they can make use of. A rag will do the same thing but a sock is generally the right size for the job.

STEP 6

By now most of the dirt will be off of the bike except for areas on the tyres so start at one end of the bike and work your way all the way around, spraying off what's left of the mud with your pressure washer.

Spray the handlebars and controls from a distance or on a lower pressure setting so that water won't enter anywhere it shouldn't. Once done, grab your bike wash and work your way around the bike again starting with the one of the wheels by spinning it up while spraying the tyre, rim, spokes and hub. Continue to spray cleaner over the rest of the bike so that it's all got a coating of cleaner including inside the airbox.

Finish at the top of the bike and by this I mean the top of the mudguards, rad scoops and side panels, petrol tank and handlebars, so that as the cleaner drips down it won't dry out if you're washing the bike in warm weather. If you start at the top of the bike then the cleaner could dry out which isn't ideal, as it needs a little time to break the dirt down.

STEP 7

After a minute or so goes by, squirt some cleaner on a car washing sponge and get to work on cleaning all the plastics – the top side and underneath – then the fork legs, swingarm, handlebars and controls, spokes and rims. Grab a brush to agitate the dirt on the tyres, brake discs, calipers, chain, sprockets and engine. Obviously with the engine the more of a variety of brushes you have the better so that no area is left untouched. Using a scouring pad and a squirt of cleaner on your brake calipers and discs will bring them up really nice.

STEP 8

After the bike is completely lathered up – although depending on your cleaner of choice it might not be all that lathery and how long it takes to get around the bike – it's time to rinse the whole bike off. Start with the tyres as there's almost always mud left on them and then work from the top of the bike down so that none of the cleaner is missed and any mud is washed downwards and off the bike.

STEP 9

Now that the bike is completely clean, spin the rear wheel up a fair few times as a load of water will be held up in the chain. Remove your sock if you chose to use one and tap the bars against the steering lock a few times each side to shake some drips off, flick the footpegs and the gear lever tip and then carefully lean the bike over about 45 degrees on each side to remove any water from level areas on the bike such as the cylinder head and engine cases.

Leave the bike to dry off on its own for five minutes or so depending on the temperature and wind then grab a rag and start to dry the bike off. I always do the brake discs first >>



Correct stance is highly important when it comes to washing your bike. Here Dan uses the rarely seen bow-legged approach...



As well as borrowing his partner's underwear on special occasions Dan likes to use her dish washing brushes too...



followed by the rims, then the handlebars and controls and then around the engine.

By this time that rag is pretty damp so grab another and wipe over the plastics, swingarm, fork legs and airbox and then go over the areas that rag one worked on if those areas still show signs of moisture. Put the rag on the top of the chain slider and carefully spin the wheel and the rag will absorb a lot of the moisture out of it. Getting the chain as dry as possible is paramount if you don't like replacing it very often.

STEP 10

There are a million-ish products out there for spraying on the bike after you've washed it. Whatever you choose to use, avoid the grips,

brake discs and your seat! Use your penetrating oil on the chain by spinning the wheel up and give it a real good coating unless you are using an o-ring or x-ring chain in which case you need to dry the chain the best you can and then apply o-ring/x-ring safe chain lube.

I've been using Putoline's PPF 52 recently which protects all metal components from corrosion so this goes on the linkage and all over the engine and it also works really well when sprayed under the mudguards.

I then spray Putoline silicon spray on the top sides of the plastics and handlebars and lastly I wipe the side panels and rad scoops with a rag to take away the residue without losing too much of the shine which will prevent you from

sliding around on your next ride.

Finally I spray Putoline 1001 on the frame and get busy with a scouring pad. If you wear boots with a hinge the frame takes a beating so working in small circles here will bring your frame up real nice. Also do the same on the gear lever, kickstart, rear brake master cylinder and the exhaust header and mid-pipe every other wash. This would also apply to two-strokes with bare metal front pipes.

STEP 11

Replace the air filter with a fresh one, bolt the seat and sumpguard on and spray the guard with your after wash spray of choice and you're good to go and get it dirty again!



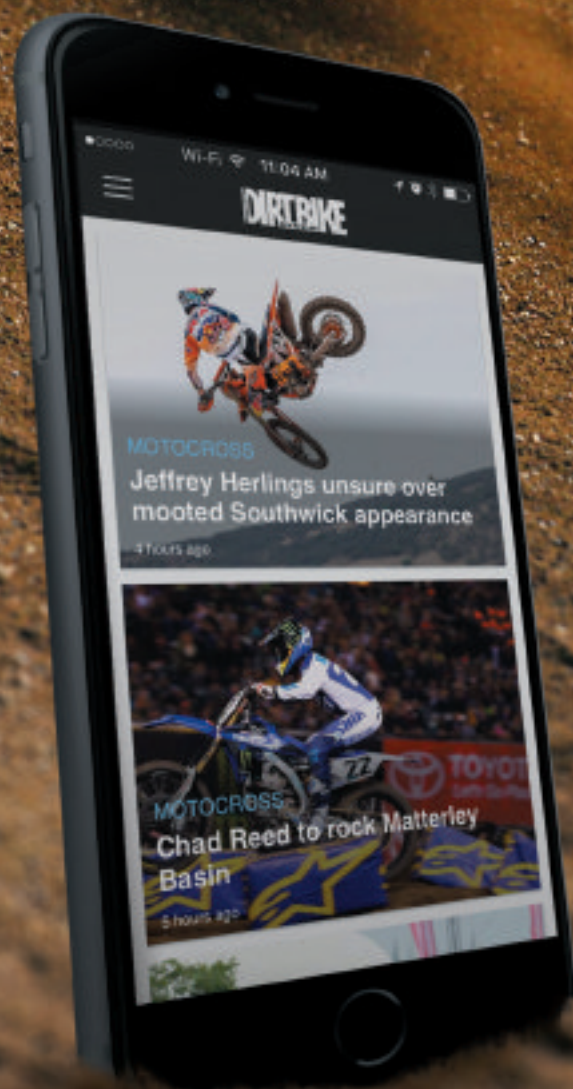
TOP TIPS

Handy hints to help you out . . .

- Use a damp sponge and cleaner to clean your seat because if it has any external stitches, pressure washing on these areas will force water into the seat foam and it'll never escape and eventually will rot the foam to death. Dry it off once clean.
- Using after wash spray really does help with reducing the time spent washing the bike the next time that you need to clean it.
- Using an air line will have step 10 finished in no time.
- Use a low pressure setting on your washer for cleaning inside the airbox and anything electrical.
- If you've ridden hard pack or on 'perfect track conditions' then you may get away with not removing the air filter. In which case wrap a couple of carrier bags over it – cause they have holes in – and then fill the rest of the airbox with rags. Gently remove all this after washing to avoid getting the filter wet.
- If the chain isn't covered in mud after a day on the bike then you can remove it to save getting it wet while washing the bike, just remember to put it back on when the sprockets have dried off. This will extend the life of your chain.
- Use a different scouring pad and cleaner on marks that are wore into your rad scoop graphics.
- You can get an older bike looking much newer using all of the steps above, trust me!
- Some people like to start the bike after washing it but I've never noticed any difference by doing this at the time or the next time I start the bike.
- If your bike has a carburettor then remember to drain the float bowl in case any moisture has made its way in there.

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BACK TO THE FUTURE!





**DOC BROWN AND MARTY - AKA ROLAND SHAW AND
TOOFAST MAX - FINISH THE BUILD AND TURN OUR
AGED YZ 125 INTO A REAL THING OF BEAUTY...**

Words and photos by Max Hind and Phil Hind



The wind the howls. A storm rages. The clock tower hits 10:04pm and the lightning strikes. This can only mean one thing – Dirt Bike Rider's YZ 125 project is finally complete and we're about to rip one hefty hole through the space time continuum. It's time to head **Back to the Future!**

Yep, we've had a very busy month putting together the finishing touches on our project bike and damn she looks good! The key objective of this project was to transform our bike into the ultimate 125 and ensure that it's as good – or maybe even better – than the latest offerings from the ultra modern KTM and Husky brands.

So with that challenge in mind we wouldn't have done ourselves – or the bike – justice if we didn't upgrade to a hydraulic clutch. I know it's only a 125 and you could argue that you don't need one but if we want the best machine out

there and we want to be as good or better than the Austrian massive then it had to be done!

Luckily for us our friends over at Venhill stepped in and put together a bespoke set-up for our YZ 125. It's a Magura system with Venhill's own hoses that they built to the specs of the bike. This meant we could choose the cable colour too which was awesome!

As our bike has a red/blue colour scheme we opted for red cables to be a bit different. They also sorted us a matching set of front and rear brake hoses in red. The standard lever on the Magura hydraulic clutch is quite long so we decided to go for an optional shorter lever which looks great and feels really good to operate. They can do these conversions for most bikes so if it's something on your wish list make sure you check them out at www.venhill.co.uk.

Next up on the list of things to finish off our bike were the plastics. With the objective of updating the bike and bringing it back to the future we felt we had to go down the route

of utilising the more modern style of plastics. We also wanted to use something that could improve performance on the bike. How can plastics improve performance? Read on...

Cycra do a product called the Powerflow restyle kit for the YZ 125. Basically the plastics look similar to the ones that you get on the latest 2016 bikes but they bolt straight on to the older YZ 125s like ours. The rad guards and the front fender feature special vents/fins to assist airflow to the engine and rads – ultimately improving cooling on the bike. So to have something that looks great and also helps with performance is pretty bad ass! We'd like to thank the guys at CI sport for helping us out with these. If you want to find out more you can check them out at www.cisport.co.uk.

To finish off the fresh new aesthetics Yamaha UK helped us out with a new fuel tank and some rad louvers as the old ones were looking pretty tired.

Once we had the plastics in place we could ➡







then get going on creating the ultimate set of graphics to finish off our project. We've done bits with the guys at ESP (extreme sports people) before. They provide top quality graphics and their designers truly transform your ideas and concepts into a reality that's awesome to behold.

When we got in touch with them about the Back to the Future project we knew they'd create something pretty damn rad. I think you'll agree when you see the finished photos that they have gone above and beyond the call of duty. It's safe to say that we're really stoked with the final results. Chad Yarranton is the Head of Motocross for ESP so you can get in touch with him 01432 261063 if your own bike needs a facelift.

Next up was stopping power. Now that we've got tons more power than a stock bike it makes sense that we also make sure that braking is improved too. Fortunately our buddies at Apico do an oversized (270 mm) front brake disc and adaptor for the YZ 125 which drastically improves the braking in comparison to the stock disc on my 2011 bike.

Interestingly the latest Yams actually do fit a 270mm disc so its great to be able to bring our bike up to spec. Not only do the discs improve stopping performance they look pretty trick too. Apico also hooked us up with a matching rear disc which looks amazing on the new Haan wheels. We also fitted a few little bits of bling courtesy of Apico to finish off the job including an anodised blue sprocket cover and brake reservoir cap...sweeeeeet!

The final finishing touch for our bike came via youth 125 supreme Tom Grimshaw as he hooked us up with one of his CFX seat covers which looks proper factory – cheers Tom!

Once again we owe a big thanks to Roland Shaw at Hardcore Racing who spent an afternoon with us putting all the final pieces of the jigsaw together and made some final adjustments with jetting etc to ensure that the bike is ready to roll. Roland is one of the nicest guys in the industry and super talented so make sure you check out Hardcore Racing if you ever need any work on your bike.

The last shout out this month goes to Chris Williams, the Chairman of the DeLorean Owners Club who very kindly loaned us his own DeLorean for our Back to the Future photo shoot. Chris you're a star! If for whatever reason you're looking to locate a DeLorean you can contact Chris at secretary@deloreans.co.uk.

Now that our bike has finally found its way to the future its time to throw on some gear and take her for a spin. So keep your eyes peeled for the last Instalment of Back to the Future next month where we'll be taking the bike out for its first ride!



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SHOCKS *n' awe!*

**SWEDISH SUSPENSION WIZARDS
OHLINS CELEBRATE 40 YEARS
OF ALL-ROUND AWESOMESS...**

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

In a year packed full of anniversaries one of motorsport's most innovative and successful component manufacturers celebrated its 40th birthday in 2016.

Swedish suspension specialists Ohlins were founded by former motocrosser and factory mechanic Kenth Ohlins in September 1976 in his hometown of Upplands Vasby, just north of Stockholm. And in the following 19 summers they accumulated 19 world motocross championships while expanding with glittering success into two and four-wheeled road racing and rallying.

Kenth had already enjoyed 15 years of involvement in motorcycle sport, having originally obtained a 50cc Zundapp motorcycle as a 12 year-old in 1961 and begun riding round his neighbourhood. But Upplands Vasby had

its own history of off-road competition and boasted a motocross track that would host Swedish 250GPs in the 1970s.

The young Ohlins soon converted his Zundapp into a race bike and by the time he reached 16, in 1965, was winning a trophy as a member of the Upplands Vasby Motor Club in the national enduro team championship, riding a customised Husqvarna 'Silverpil'.

Two years later the 18 year-old clinched the national junior 500cc title on a 360 Husky and started working for the factory. In 1970 he visited the USA, making his race debut there in Boise, Idaho. But more importantly, while in the States he came into contact with another Scandinavian legend, the late Eyvind Boyesen.

"Boyesen's reed valve had changed how a two-stroke engine worked," explains Kenth. "That was something I'd been engaged in for several years, among other things building an

exhaust pipe for Husqvarna."

He returned to America in 1972 working for Husqvarna factory star Arne Kring. Runner-up in the 1970 500cc world championship, Kring was one of those early European pioneers who crossed the Atlantic and inspired fledgling US riders. In the States in '72 he contested both the 500cc Trans-AM and 250cc Inter-AM series, finishing third in the latter. Husqvarna having supplied them with a new motor, Kenth built four new exhaust systems to improve performance and Kring won the last race of the Inter-AM.

Back home in Sweden Kenth built and tuned a couple of new Husqvarna cylinders using Boyesen reed valves, but the factory was unimpressed so Ohlins started up his own workshop, only 50 square metres in area, in Edsberg, outside Stockholm. He called his new venture 'Ohlins Mekaniska Racing'



Hakan Carlqvist (Yamaha) wins vital San Marino round to lead 1983 500GPs

selling motocross accessories and Husqvarna motorcycles and offering specialist engine tuning.

One of OMR's first inventions was a stand to park your bike on in the paddock but more vitally Kenth turned his attention to shock absorbers. "The shocks available on the market at the time didn't work particularly well," recalls Ohlins. "A few people in Belgium and Holland were modifying pressurised car shock absorbers but these were hampered by thin piston rods that were prone to overheating and bending under the stress of motocross racing. Above all they couldn't be rebuilt and had no adjustable settings. I felt that I should be able to come up with something better!

"We were assisted by an engineer from Husqvarna called Claes Sundberg who worked for us as a consultant and designed a piston that we could sinter ourselves." Sourcing the

best materials available Kenth and his team achieved the Ohlins vision of a fully adjustable shock that could be rebuilt and renovated. "What we couldn't even begin to dream of," he adds proudly, "was that it would be such a quality product that we're still being sent shock absorbers that are forty years old and still in working order!"

The first rider to test these revolutionary shocks works for Ohlins to this day. Already a grand prix winner, Torleif Hansen mounted them on his 250 Kawasaki in 1976. He was followed by 1973 250 world champion Hakan Andersson whose mechanic, on hearing of these magic new shocks, modified Hakan's factory Montesa to fit the longer stroke required.

"Until we arrived on the scene there was no shock absorber that could deal with longer suspension travel," explains Kenth. "But we produced a shock with adjustable settings,

a proper range of springs and a racing service – and the shocks worked! We gave riders what they had always wanted. Our first really big order was from Husqvarna, for 10,000 shock absorbers to equip their production bikes."

Ohlins also produced for Husqvarna a new exhaust system that OMR could sell as an aftermarket product and export abroad. He began supporting a Swedish racing team, with sponsorship from a chewing gum company, called 'Team Juicy Fruit'. Their number one rider, Magnus Nyberg, would become a regular grand prix contender and their mechanic, Bo Magnusson, Hakan Carlqvist's factory Yamaha wrench a decade down the line.

"But our racing service was the key to our success," reckons Ohlins. "At first we were alone in having a dedicated racing service. I took care of it myself for many years, packing my old Merc bus and setting off around

>>



FEEL THE FLOW



Öhlins has its roots in Motocross and can look back with pride on 40 years of experience and countless championship titles. Quality and innovation have always been our driving force and for the 2017 Motocross models we will offer the brand new TTX Flow as a step forward in technological advancement. Equipped with our twin-tube technology and a patented pressure regulation, it allows quick and safe riding with more traction, stability and grip. The new TTX Öhlins Flow - a difference you can feel.



Europe every Friday morning, or sometimes Thursday night, servicing shocks at the races and returning home to work on Monday evening. Sometimes I could get someone to share the driving but usually I was alone. I'd equipped the bus with shelves, cupboards, a workbench and a small washing machine. It didn't look like trucks do today but it got the job done and above all we were available in the pits when we were needed!"

I enjoyed personal experience of this Mercedes truck after the 1979 Motocross des Nations at Ruskeasanta, where Graham Noyce and Neil Hudson led Great Britain to a scintillating second place. Somehow I found myself being thrown around in the passenger seat on an alcohol-fuelled night-time flight through dense Finnish pine forests, Noycey at the wheel and Kenth and Bo rolling all over the floor helpless with mirth like a pair of itinerant school children!

'Ohlins Racing AB' was registered as a company in Sweden in 1976, boasting the catchphrase 'Makes and knows everything about bikes' on its stickers! The first gas

shock absorbers with a separate container were finally ready on May 5th 1977 with a range of 35 springs to evaluate!

'Ohlins Gas Shocks' come into being with their first model, S36 and their first big order that request for 10,000 across a two-year period to fit Husqvarna's CR390 – the very first production motocrosser to come equipped with Ohlins! Kenth also started up a bike shop at Ynglingagatan, in Stockholm and took over distribution of spares for Suzuki in Sweden. Not only that but he modified a pair of rear shocks for road racer Peter Skold's GS750 Suzuki and Peter promptly won the very first race of a new Superbike class, held at Anderstorp alongside the Swedish road racing grand prix!

Meanwhile Torleif Hansen's success on the 250GP trail, where he won GPs in Poland and Czechoslovakia, dramatically raised Ohlins' profile across the motocross paddocks and produced Kenth's big break.

KTM had already dominated the 1977 250cc world championships locking out the top three with Russians Gennady Moiseev and Vladimir Kavinov and Belgian newcomer Andre

Malherbe before the Austrian factory decided to fit Ohlins Gas Shocks for the 1978 season.

The result was a mighty all-Ohlins contest between Moiseev and Hansen's Kawasaki that resulted in the rugged Russian claiming his third and Kenth's first world motocross title. And the last international race of the season saw Hansen and fellow Swede Hakan Carlqvist, on his Ohlins-suspended Husqvarna, dominate the Trophee des Nations at Kester, in Belgium.

By now the Edsberg premises were simply too small for Ohlins' burgeoning business and he moved production of his gas shocks 'back home' to Upplands Vasby, where Swedish 250GPs had been won in 1971 by Joel Robert (Suzuki) and in 1974 by Torleif Hansen!

1979 and Ohlins did the double, wild Englishman Graham Noyce (Honda) and powerful Swede Carlqvist (Husqvarna) winning 500 and 250cc world championships respectively – 'Carla' absolutely annihilating the quarter-litre class.

That was also the year Kawasaki debuted their 'Uni-Trak' rear monoshock system. Yamaha had for several seasons used

>>



Thoughtful Torleif at 1978 French 250GP



In his first ever 500 race Johnny O'Mara soars to MX des success in 1981

OHLINS FIRSTS!

Test Pilot: Torleif Hansen

Burly, blonde and ebullient, Torleif Hansen first sprung to fame when, at just 23, he secured Kawasaki's first ever motocross grand victories, winning the 1974 British and Swedish 250GPs, the latter ironically at the future home of Ohlins, Upplands Vasby. Brash and outspoken, Torleif was promptly christened by the English press the 'Cassius Clay of Motocross'!

A constant challenger for world 250 honours for the next four seasons, Torleif competed against Kenth Ohlins in Swedish championship races during the late sixties, went on to claim six national titles and first entered the grand prix arena in 1968. Riding for Husqvarna Hansen won the 1970 French GP at Pernes les Fontaines, beating the all-conquering Suzuki of Joel Robert. He and Kenth also shared those winter excursions to the States, Hansen finishing third in the 1971 500 Trans-Am ahead of world champions Roger de Coster, Joel

Robert and Heikki Mikkola.

"The races were actually tougher in the States as there was only one class for Pros – the 500cc division, and those bikes were animals," recalls Torleif, now 65 and still working at Ohlins. "You have to remember that the factory 500 two-strokes had maybe 15 bhp more than a 450F bike of today – but none of the handling! I think the three biggest innovations that helped us riders were long travel suspension, water-cooling and then disc brakes, which made suspension, power and braking so much more consistent."

When Torleif finished his GP career in 1978 at only 27 he went to work at Ohlins full-time until 1987 when he departed for the construction industry. During that time he returned to racing for a couple of seasons in 1982, even winning the 10th grand prix of his career, the 1983 Swedish 250 round at Jarva on an Ohlins Yamaha!

After a decade away he got a call from Kenth saying 'it's been 10 years, it's time to come back'. A part-time test riding job soon turned into full-time and Torleif's there still

despite major knee surgery a couple of years ago. "I love my job so why stop?" asks one of the fastest and most spectacular racers of his generation. "Maybe in four or five years' time when my wife retires so will I. We'll see! I think hanging around young guys keeps you on your toes, so that's good."

Two of those younger guys at Ohlins are his sons Terje and Robin, who also work at the Ohlins factory in Upplands Vasby. Eldest son Terje followed in his father's footsteps into motocross GPs and then across to the American racing scene as a suspension technician while Robin chose a completely different route and now works in Ohlins' automotive division.

"For sure it's great that my boys work here but I try and let them go their own way," smiles Torleif. "My middle son Tom is a producer on Swedish radio so it's good that one of us does something different and has a life outside of suspension!"

And Torleif, as befits his original English nickname, has also commentated live at Uddevalla's Swedish MXGPs in recent years...

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Hakan Carlqvist (Husqvarna) smashes the last round in Germany as 1979 250 world champ



Danny LaPorte (Yamaha) snatches 1982 world 250 title at Vimmerby in Sweden



Yamaha's radical ally framed 1987 YZM500 factory bike boasted Ohlins suspension

a skittish triangulated rear swingarm with a single shock mounted almost horizontally under the fuel tank but Team Green's innovative design triggered all the other manufacturers into action with variations on the same theme, the mighty Honda Racing Corporation leading the way with their 'Pro-Link'.

So Kenth developed a single shock prototype, the S46. "Then we made our first Piggyback shock for Englishman Graham Noyce," beams Ohlins. "He came to our workshop with his new factory Honda to get new shocks fitted but there was nowhere on the bike to attach an external reservoir so we had to improvise with a short hose to the reservoir that was mounted on the shock. Graham then continued on his way to Ruskeasanta, in Finland, where he won their 500GP. Not a bad debut for the Piggyback!"

Torleif Hansen meantime, disillusioned after losing that 1978 250 series to Moiseev, had prematurely retired from racing aged only 27 and began working full-time for Ohlins, first as a salesman in the bike shop – which was also

moved to Upplands Vasby – and subsequently as sales manager and test rider.

1980 and Belgian duo Georges Jobe (Suzuki) and Andre Malherbe (Honda) repeated Ohlins' double win in both 250 and 500 world championships, Georges using twin-shocks because Suzuki's 'Full Floater' monoshock system wasn't ready. Jobe lost out to wild card Carlqvist in the final round, the departing champion winning at, of all places, Upplands Vasby on a YZ250 Yamaha, using Ohlins of course.

Kenth also started working on a special shock for the futuristic Suzuki Katana 1100 production road bike while one of his designers, Bruce Burness, prepared an MX shock for use in AMA road racing. Honda America riders Mike Baldwin and future world champion Freddie Spencer tried them out and suddenly the phones start ringing in Upplands Vasby!

By 1981 all four Japanese manufacturers were using Ohlins Gas Shocks for their motocross grand prix campaigns. Englishman Neil Hudson (Yamaha) stole the 250 crown

from Jobe and Malherbe once more claimed the 500cc title for Honda. That was seven world championships in four seasons! And to top off an incredible year an all-Honda Ohlins suspended US team conquered both Trophee and Motocross des Nations for the first time.

This extraordinary record expanded even further in 1982 when Ohlins claimed all three solo world titles with Brad Lackey (500 Suzuki), LaPorte (250 Yamaha) and Eric Geboers (125 Suzuki) and even their first sidescar success with Emil Bollhalder. Also French Yamaha importer Sonauto, under the astute guidance of Jean-Claude Olivier, introduced Ohlins into the Paris-Dakar Rally while road racing superstars Kenny Roberts and Christian Sarron fitted the Swedish shocks to their factory YZR500 Yamahas. This led Ohlins into a close alliance with the Japanese manufacturer.

The result was Ohlins' first tarmac world title when Venezuelan Carlos Lavada and his TZ Yamaha won the 1983 250cc series, the year Hakan Carlqvist, their 500cc motocross contender, took on the might of HRC on his >>

OHLINS FIRSTS!

World title!

When the KTM factory moved on to Ohlins rear shocks in 1978 it pitched their rugged Russian riders Gennady Moiseev and Vladimir Kavinov – who had dominated the 1977 250 world championship – into direct conflict with original Ohlins test rider Torleif Hansen and his factory Kawasaki. The latter would be the only Japanese bike in the top 15 against works weapons from Maico, CZ, Bultaco, Husqvarna and Montesa.

The opening round at Sabadell, in Spain, saw Bultaco's Harry Everts and Husqvarna's Hakan Carlqvist share the spoils on a day of DNFs, Everts the overall winner with a 1-8 scoreline! Hansen and Moiseev netted only a third and fourth between them and Torleif fared even worse with a double DNF in an Italian mudbath where Moiseev traded race wins with Hans Maisch (Maico).

The swashbuckling Swede recovered at Holice, in Czechoslovakia, losing the overall on a tie-breaker with Kavinov then beating Moiseev in Yugoslavia, where they shared race wins. Then another disastrous day at Schwanenstadt, in Austria handed the advantage back to Moiseev, who finished second to a flying Jaroslav Falta (CZ).

But Moiseev had his only dud day of the year at Beuerne, in West Germany, where Hansen narrowly lost out on overall victory to Maisch, lanky Hans taking his one and only grand prix win in front of an ecstatic home crowd. So half-way through the season Moiseev and Hansen headed to Kilmartin, in Scotland, for the British GP with the Russian a slender single point to the good.

But that was where the year turned sour for Torleif. A heavy practice crash put him out of action for the weekend and Moiseev swept his KTM to an imperious double win. Then round the rough, rocky, dusty hillsides of Ahun, in France Hansen crashed in race one. To the bewilderment of another early faller, Englishman Rob Hooper (Maico), Torleif sat and watched trackside as Rob hauled himself almost back into the points – which back then only went down to 10th place. "I thought if I could do that Torleif would surely have made it back inside the top 10," recalls Rob, now team boss at Geartec Yamaha.

Meanwhile Kavinov's resounding double won the day ahead of Hooper's team-mate Neil Hudson and Moiseev. Suddenly the latter had opened up a 49 point advantage in the championship table and he subsequently followed home Hansen, third and fourth in the second moto of Unadilla's USGP. So when Torleif suffered another wretched day on home soil in Jarva, where Moiseev won race one, Kavinov race two and Hudson the first grand prix of his career the Russian almost had the title in his grasp.

Hansen finally fought back with victory at Hyvinkaa in Finland to keep alive a remote chance of the championship. But with the final round in Moiseev's home city of Leningrad he responded emphatically in front of 100,000 Russian fans, beating Hansen in race one to seal his third world crown. The battle for second in the table was still wide open though and Torleif prevailed in race two to snatch back the vice-championship by a single point from Maisch, with Kavinov a further point adrift.

So Ohlins' first world championship went to the granite-jawed 30 year-old Russian soldier Gennady Moiseev by 30 points, on his KTM, with Torleif Hansen and Vladimir Kavinov making it three Ohlins riders in the top four!



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antiquated aircooled YZ490 'Motor of Death' using a brand new Ohlins upside down 'FGMX' front fork. Thus equipped with Ohlins fully adjustable suspension front and rear 'Carla' won a titanic struggle and lifted the 500MX crown while Bollhalder once more took sidecar honours.

Husqvarna continued to fit Ohlins to their production 'crossers, bulk ordering a special blue-painted S36 ITC model in 1983 and engineer Lennart Larsson started testing gas shocks on road bikes like the Suzuki GSX1100 and Honda's CH750F. Ohlins took out a patent in 1984 on the first electronically supported shock absorber, developed by another of Kenth's main men, Tommy Malm, and the CES valve was born.

That year also saw the Swedish Army ordering shock absorbers for their Husqvarnas (over 30 years later they are still using Ohlins!) and a sensational victory for American legend Eddie Lawson who claimed the blue riband 500cc road racing world title for Yamaha and Ohlins!

1985 and Flying Finn Pekka Vehkonen

clinched the 125 world MX crown for Cagiva, who also began fitting Ohlins as standard on their rally inspired Ducati-engined Cagiva Elefant and the following year Ducati themselves used Ohlins on their 750cc Paso road bike.

By now the number of employees at Kenth's Upplands Vasby premises had swollen to 27 and Ohlins Racing AB was bought out by Yamaha, though American Fred Merkel won the inaugural AMA Superbike championship on an Ohlins-suspended Honda VFR750 while Lawson claimed a second 500GP title for Yamaha. These successes coincided with Swiss team Eggenberger winning the first ever European Touring Car Championship using Volvo 240 turbos equipped with Ohlins suspension front and rear!

1986 brought off-road titles for Jacky Vimond (250 Yamaha) and Swiss sidecar ace Christophe Husser and in 1987 John van den Berk won Yamaha's first ever 125MX world championship. That year also witnessed the first Snowmobile Gas Shocks and Kenth opened a new branch at Jonkoping under the

supervision of Tommy Malm, working mainly on the latter's beloved CES system.

Ohlins Road and Track upside down front forks went into the production for both racing and street use. They were soon seen as standard on both Ducati and Aprilia and in 1988 Lawson won first time out using these forks in the Austrian 500GP at Salzburgring. Dashing Dutchman Van den Berk clinched the 250cc world motocross championship for Yamaha, Husser once more took sidecar honours and on tarmac a third title for Lawson was matched by Merkel winning the first ever World Superbike title for Honda.

This massive momentum continued into 1989, with Husser and Merkel triumphant once more and the introduction of a special 'Yamaha 360 kit' for riders who wanted to build a bike for 500cc MX based on their YZ250. And 1990 brought Ohlins the first of many Enduro titles when Jimmy Eriksson and ex-motocrosser Peter Hansson became Sweden's first world champions, Jimmy on a 350 Husaberg and the swashbuckling Hansson on a 500 KTM.

Their future Enduro titans would include >>



'King of the Jungle' Carl Fogarty (right) pictured with dad George won four world superbike titles with Ohlins and Ducati



Ohlins test pilot Torleif Hansen's sensational 1982 GP comeback netted his 10th grand prix win



Original Ohlins GP superstars Torleif Hansen (left) and Hakan Andersson at 1989 Namur vets reunion



1994 125 world champions Mr and Mrs Bob Moore!



Finnish teenager Pekka Vehkonen won 1985 125 world title on a Cagiva



First French world champ Jacky Vimond opened the floodgates in 1986



Torleif Hansen (Kawasaki) runner up in 1978 250GPs

WHERE DID OHLINS GO?

Given that it's 22 years since the beautiful gold gas shocks of Ohlins adorned a world motocross championship winning motorcycle, what exactly happened to their off-road effort?

Well, it would appear that the far greater financial potential of road racing and motor cars has taken precedence. Richard Brendish is the guy who manages Ohlins' massively successful efforts in the British Superbike paddock where Ohlins have won the title 16 out of the last 19 seasons! He works from home in Hitchin, Hertfordshire.

"Supporting the BSB paddock costs us 150 grand a year in wages alone," explains Richard. "I have to have six technicians on site at every round!" Ohlins also supports national superbike championships in Australia, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, New Zealand and the USA.

Richard points out that motocross championship exposure just doesn't merit that kind of investment, though Ohlins is always updating its off-road product range and recently introduced their new 'TTX Flow' latest generation rear motocross shock.

Yet their huge presence in World Superbikes is spearheaded by former motocross grand prix winner Guiseppe Andreani. His beautiful trucks are a gleaming feature of the WSB paddock, where most of the field use Ohlins all-new RVP25 front forks and iconic Italian brand Ducati have won all 14 of their world titles between 1990 and 2011 with Ohlins fitted front and rear.

An outwardly easy-going, modest man 'Beppe' Andreani maintains a constant personal presence at all the championship rounds and smiles bashfully when I remind him that I saw his superb second-moto victory in the 1988 French 250GP at Salindres – on a WP Honda!

World superbike personnel are astounded when I tell them this mild-mannered chap won KTM's first ever 125GP and is the only man ever to win a motocross grand prix on an Aprilia! But until another Beppe bobs up in MXGP rather than WSB paddocks then Ohlins world championship-winning ways will continue to be on asphalt rather than dirt...

names like Kari Tainen, Jeff Nilsson and our very own 'Fast Eddy', Paul Edmondson. 1990 also saw Ohlins' first road racing double when Americans John Kocinski and Wayne Rainey lifted both 250 and 500cc tarmac world championships for Yamaha. Rainey would repeat his 500cc victory in 1991 and achieve a hat-trick in 1992 using the electronic CES damper that was so clever it was later banned from road racing!

Fellow Yank Doug Polen took successive World Superbike titles for Ducati while Yamaha reclaimed the 250cc motocross crown when Minnesota's Donny Schmit beat Chesterfield team-mate Bob Moore with Ohlins' riders Alex Puzar, Marnicq Bervoerts and Peter Johansson fourth, fifth and sixth! Ohlins also dipped their

toes into American Indycar racing with the Newman-Haas team owned by Hollywood legend, racing enthusiast and my all-time screen hero Paul Newman. The result was that ex-Formula One world champion Nigel Mansell won the 1993 Champcar series racing a Newman-Haas Lola fitted with the new Ohlins DR1 shock absorbers.

That year also witnessed the triumphant return of four-strokes to MXGP racing as Jacky Martens snatched the world title on his bellowing 600cc Husqvarna while Scott Russell (Kawasaki) won World Superbikes and Tetsuya Harada (Yamaha) the 250 road race championship. 1994 saw Bob Moore claim the 125 world motocross title on his Chesterfield Yamaha, Marcus Hansson (Honda) pinch

Martens' 500cc crown and future 'King of the Jungle' Carl Fogarty (Ducati) nail the first of his four World Superbike championships.

From then on Ohlins have savoured continuing success in virtually every aspect of motorsport; motorcycle grand prix racing (including a new teenage sensation called Valentino Rossi), World and British Superbikes, four straight World Rally Championships with Tommi Makinen and Mitsubishi, the British Touring Car Championship with Rickard Rydell and Frank Biela, European Truck Racing with Mercedes, Alex Zanardi in the US CART series, snowmobiling, the Indianapolis 500 with Juan Pablo Montoya, Audi R8 nine times in succession at the Le Mans 24 hours, Tony Rikardsson's fifth speedway world title, Tony



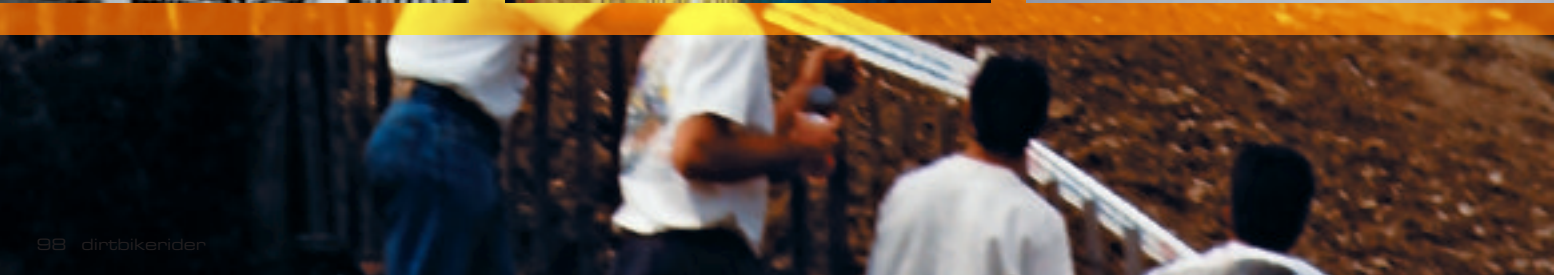
Bob Moore (Yamaha) skips round Foxhill to win 1994 British 125GP



Vimond (right) meets his hero original Ohlins ace Hakan Andersson at Maggiora in 1992



Ducati has won all its 14 world superbike titles with Ohlins. This is Troy Corser's 1986 winner



Stewart in NASCAR, Bentley at Le Mans, mountain biking, Audi V8 in the German DTM Touring Car championship, BMW 320 and Seat Leon hat-tricks in the World Touring Car Championship and Adam Raga winning the 2003 World Indoor Trials Championship for Gas Gas. Ohlins have penetrated every conceivable branch of motor racing!

Kenth Ohlins bought back his company from Yamaha in 2007 and this led to cooperation with other manufacturers like BMW, Kawasaki, Harley Davidson, Ferrari and Honda. Ohlins opened a new Distribution and Test Centre at the Nurburgring, managed by Dutch suspension specialist Wim Peters of WP fame!

At the 2009 Stockholm Motorcycle Show Kenth was inaugurated into the Classic Bike

Hall of Fame and Ohlins patented their new TTX off-road technology. The following year, after a two-year absence, Ohlins briefly re-entered the MX world championship with Yamaha and Michele Rinaldi, who had guided Schmit and Moore to their Chesterfield successes and Audi conquered Le Mans again, this time with their R18 diesel.

Since then a factory has opened in Thailand, the CBR 1000RR Fireblade became Honda's first production motorcycle to boast Ohlins as standard, Citroen has won two successive World Rally championships and Kenth Ohlins now employs 300 staff.

Triumphs in World and British Superbikes and MotoGP mean that Ohlins are firmly established in road racing paddocks around

the globe but perhaps inevitably motocross has suffered during the compilation of this imposing company CV. Despite their continuing innovative presence in the off-road biking world, those 18th and 19th world MX championship titles in 1994 were Ohlins' last.

The 21st century 'Ohlins Hall of Fame' features standout tarmac champions like James Toseland, Troy Bayliss, Tommy Hill and the greatest of them all, Valentino Rossi. But the only motocrossers listed are Livia Lancelot for her 2008 Womens' World championship and American Zach Osborne, who claimed the 2010 British MX2 title aboard one of Steve Dixon's Yamahas. Perhaps Kenth needs to bring back that old Mercedes bus!

Jacky Martens celebrates his 1993 success at Geneva



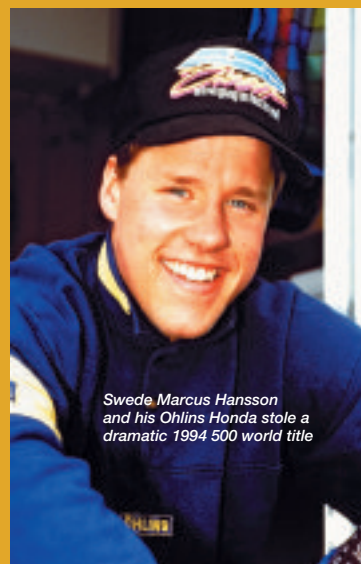
Donny Schmit (Yamaha) soars to 1992 250 title in his rookie season



Typically spectacular Torleif in 1978
Trophee des Nations at Kester in Belgium



Swede Marcus Hansson
and his Ohlins Honda stole a
dramatic 1994 500 world title





THE NEW BREED

The last two MXGP FIM World Champions have both been rookies. Is it just a coincidence? Or do riders need to be younger and more aggressive to attack for the titles? We sought the opinions from the people at the sharp end of the series . . .

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer



The last two MXGP FIM World Championships have been won by category rookies at the ages of 23 and 19 and steering different brands of works machinery. To put both Romain Febvre and Tim Gajser's achievements into perspective they have faced opposition from six other factory teams outside of their own and 19 competitors in the premier class that boast experience of taking a Grand Prix chequered flag or uncorking podium champagne.

Stefan Everts won the last of his titles in 2006 at the age of 34. Steve Ramon was next at 28 then David Philippaerts was champion in 2008 with 25 years on the clock. Tony Cairoli's run of six crowns began in 2009 when the Sicilian was 24. Febvre owned proceedings at 23 in 2015 and now Gajser has chopped the scale down to the sub-20s.

Is MXGP – with 18 rounds, 36 motos and 54 race starts if you include qualification heats – becoming even more of a young man's game? A contest that always involves a slice of fortune is better built on the virtues of youth, namely through the risk-takers and the aggressors? Perhaps it is just natural evolution of a supremely physical sport. One in which Ryan Dungey is a double AMA Supercross Champion at 26 and Ken Roczen a world MX2 and double AMA Motocross #1 just after his 22nd birthday.

One thing seems to be fairly clear – Febvre and Gajser have injected more urgency into MXGP. The best example was seen at the Grand Prix of France at St Jean D'Angely in June. Both pulled clear of the pack and were barely separated until the final laps, sharing a moto win each with Febvre winning the overall thanks to taking the second moto chequered flag. It was not just the authority of the result but also the manner of the performances with both running a ragged edge and leaving little in the locker. The duo were embroiled in a championship dispute until Febvre's probing and pacey instincts bit back with a crash in qualification for the British Grand Prix that caused a concussion and derailed his season. In the remaining seven rounds Romain made the podium twice but didn't bag another 25 points.

"Two young guys came into the class and pushed the level up and we have to fight more for it," commented Monster Energy Kawasaki's Clement Desalle during an interview at Lommel for the Grand Prix of Belgium in July. Desalle, like peers such as Rockstar Energy IceOne Husqvarna's Max Nagl and HRC's Gautier Paulin have been the chief challengers to Cairoli – now 30 – since the start of the decade.

The Belgian is also one of five fathers in the MXGP crop. He managed a 20th Grand Prix win at Assen in August with a 3-3 and is the second most successful rider aside from Cairoli in the last ➤



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10 years in the MXGP division. Desalle has also had a poor run with injury and since 2010 has never been able to reach the final motos of campaign for the main prize. In fact with the exception of '10 when Cairoli clinched his second MXGP gong and his first for KTM, '22' has managed to have a championship party at least a round early from '09-'14.

"It is important to find a good limit," Desalle believes. "Sometimes when I see the videos [of this year's races] you can really see the limit. As the years pass you get more experience. Let's see how the future turns out because the young guys are very fast and pushing a lot and I think that will change. It is hard to live on the limit all the time without being injured."

To gauge what people are seeing, thinking and observing in MXGP we formulated three questions and grabbed a cross-section from the paddock...

DBR: Is there a sea change coming into MXGP?

Tony Cairoli, Red Bull KTM Racer, 8 x World Champion: "I don't think the speed has gone up much but there are more riders at a better level. Before four or five riders were good and the rest were so-so. Now it seems from first to 13th the speed is closer. If you have a bad race you are ninth or tenth whereas before you were fourth or fifth."

Marnicq Bervoets, Team Manager, Kemea Yamaha: "Last year we saw Romain Febvre more aggressive on the bike and now Tim Gajser. When you saw them riding the 250s

then you thought 'they're gonna crash on the 450' but it didn't turn out to be true and it looks like they can handle the bikes with that style. I think this means that the bikes are handling much better now than in years before. The suspension is better, the chassis is a lot better and engine-wise with the electronics is not so aggressive and you can open the gas immediately without freaking out and that helps."

Dirk Gruebel, Red Bull KTM Team Manager (MX2):

"It looks like they have a different approach in the first 15 minutes of the race. They go 100 per cent and push really hard. If you go three or four years back then people made the start, pushed for two laps, somehow they settled and then they raced. Now it looks like they go as hard as they can and look to survive until the end."

Stefan Everts, General Manager, Team Suzuki, 10 x World Champion:

"I don't think it will be like this every year. Tony had been at the top for quite a few seasons and I think we are just seeing the new generation coming in to take over. Febvre, Gajser and next year Herlings are going to be the ones taking championships for the coming years. I don't think we'll see a new guy popping up every year to take over."

Cairoli: "I don't think we are seeing some 'new generation'. There have been two good years for 'them' and a lot of injuries to me, Desalle, Nagl. This year there were some up-and-downs for me. Let's say they are a little wilder in some

places and they get lucky with some sketchy moments but that is part of motocross. They are young and they go for it whereas we maybe think about staying safe and go for points. Maybe their approach is working a little bit better at the moment. For me second place is also quite good. In 13 years of Grand Prix motocross I have stayed part of the top three and I cannot complain. Next year we'll be more ready."

Roger Harvey, Director of Off-Road Racing Honda Europe:

"Look at the sizes of them. Tim is becoming a big strong lad and Jeffrey Herlings also. There comes a time when they need 450 power and they move onto that. When Tim moved up late into 2015 people said to us 'are you sure?' and seeing how he rode the 250 last year we were pretty confident about what he could do and he proved that."

Gruebel: "It is a different generation and they run different tactics. Most of them so far have been lucky in terms of big injuries – I'm excluding Jeffrey because he has had some big ones in MX2 – but if you want to run with the front guys then you need to approach it in the same way: like they do in MX2 when they go flat out. Jeffrey does it this way and you have seen Febvre and Gajser go up and it has worked for them."

Romain Febvre, 2015 MXGP FIM World Champion, fourth in the 2016 series: "Gajser is really young and he could have stayed three or four more years in MX2 but he decided to >>



Tim Gajser has brought a whole new level of intensity to the 450 class

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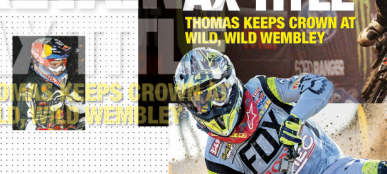


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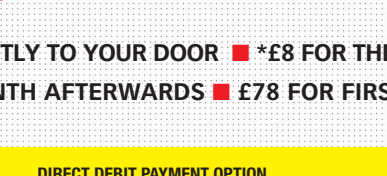
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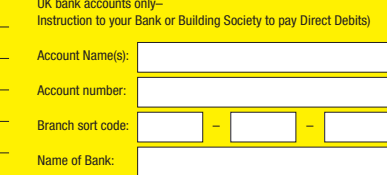
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Stefan Everts – the winningest rider in MXGP history – is impressed by the new breed's levels of intensity and aggression...

move and had nothing to prove anymore. I think Herlings should have moved before because his level is the same or going a bit down. He has had no competitors and was leading many motos by a big distance so even if he made a mistake or even a small crash then he didn't have to worry.

"In MXGP this year then a small mistake meant you could not win the moto. I think the level between Gajser and myself went higher and higher and the others were starting to catch us after the first part of the season. Even if Tim or myself had a bad start then we were able to come back and now it is a bit more difficult because everyone has stepped up. Age is not important but attitude is and you have to make the right decision about what you want to do."

Harvey: 'I think all of them push the limits. And I don't think it is necessary.'

Everts: 'The difference is the intensity of the racing. The aggression that they have! Romain and Tim are attacking from the first lap on. The older generation find their position and tend to follow, they have their limit and cannot stretch it too much. The new guys still have reserves and something in the pocket to attack and make passes. In some GPs you might see Max [Nagl] start well and run at the front then when he doesn't start well he is in the pack and cannot come through. The same for Tony. There are only a few who can come back to the front and that's the new generation.'

Febvre: 'Mentally I did not change but I had to push more this year. Last year I was the one raising the level and it was a bit easier. Tim came and started winning right away and quickly took confidence. In France we were really close battling and we pulled away by quite a few seconds from the others. I really raised my game there and he actually beat me in one moto. The level was going like this [angle hand upwards] each moto.'

Gruebel: "That these guys could come up and win the world championship in their rookie season – this didn't happen so much in the past but they use a different riding style and tactics. The older guys can win some races also – for sure – but over the whole season? The tracks are getting faster and you need to adapt. It seems like they are better for the younger generation."

DBR: Will the style and attitude calm over the years? Will injuries play a part?

Cairol: "For sure when you hit the ground with the 450 it is a different story compared to the 250 where you can save a 'moment' easier. It is also part of the job – the more you crash the more you are scared to ride."

Bervoets: 'You have some guys – like Romain and Tim – that are really strong. They have crashes but genetically they can withstand it. It's like Valentin Guillod also. I see him have some big crashes and he comes back in with nothing but >>



Romain Febvre shocked many by winning the MXGP title in his rookie year

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THE NEW BREED

Clement Desalle is one of the many MXGP riders rethinking his game

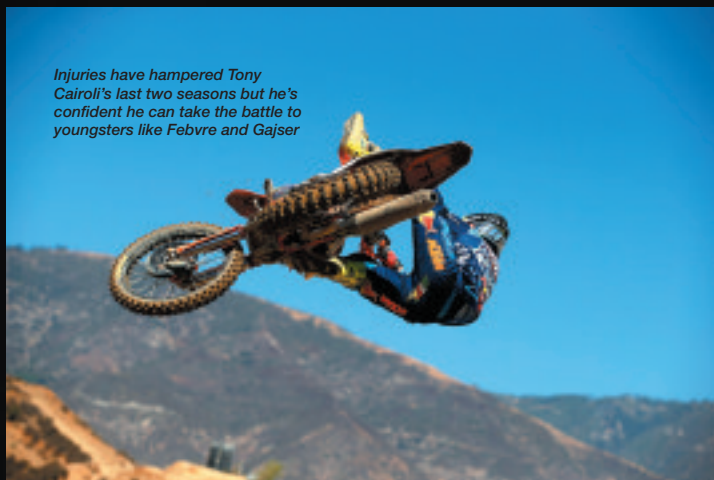
some bruises. They are really flexible. It is nothing to do with luck I think you are just born like that. Others can crash at 10kmph and they pick-up something."

Harvey: "The only guarantee with two wheels is that you won't be on them at one time or another."

Everts: "These guys are not scared. They will open the throttle and see how they can make the turn. Sometimes you can see them over the edge and the others a bit less."

Harvey: "Gajser broke his back at the Motocross of Nations in 2014 and came back riding a couple of months later. I think they have all had their injuries by the time they reach this level. It affects different people in different ways and the young probably think less about it. Some of the crashes Tim had last year – and [Pauls] Jonas as well – where he has gone so high off the bike and you think 'whoah, that will calm them down' but no..."

Injuries have hampered Tony Cairoli's last two seasons but he's confident he can take the battle to youngsters like Febvre and Gajser



they remedy their mistakes and they don't make them again. Everyone gets a good slap or two. I think crashes make them work through their riding a bit differently. They seem like a 'new guard of old hands' – riders who are not only fast but with a lot of experience and a lot of drive."

Febvre: "I speak for myself because I cannot talk about the others but I am pushing my level...and also trying not to take many risks. I do not want to disconnect my brain and that's why I have not been too good in Timed Practice. I was a bit better last year but I am usually not at the front because I cannot switch off my head for just one lap. I am not crazy. I do what I can. Before my crash in the UK we'd done half of the championship and we'd been at the front every GP. Other riders are up-and-down and when they feel good they can produce and take more risks. They do that when they feel it is their weekend whereas we are consistently at the front. After my injury I had just two weeks of riding but came back and was third overall straightaway." >>

Red Bull KTM MX2 Team Manager Dirk Gruebél





Although yet to really make his mark in the premier class Valentin Guillod has the skill set required to win in MXGP

Cairolì: "I was riding half a season without confidence. I was riding conservatively and to survive the first rounds. I could not attack when the goal was to attack from the first races and make it clear that you are going to be fighting for the championship. Also for the mental side this helps. So I was riding under my full potential until Teutschenthal [Germany, round seven] and then better and better but then had a broken hand in England. It was difficult to accept these problems."

Febvre: "We are not taking risks but the high consistency is there. We are pushing the level. I think Gajser had more moments than me. He was not out of control...but he had some luck to stay on the bike. He is good."

Bervoets: "With the older riders everything tends to have to be perfect. The younger riders live for the bike and, championship or not, they want to go as fast as possible and many times when you do that then you crash and [suffer] nothing. It is really strange."

Everts: "The older you get the more you change and more you want to be in control of your

racing. With Tim there were a few times in racing when it was 'on-off' and they are not scared to be on that edge and limit. The same for Romain. The older generation will maybe ride with a bit more control."

Bervoets: "The older guys want to be safe... or they want to be 'sure' when they are going through a section...and this might cost them three tenths and lead to a bad gate position and then a bad start."

Harvey: "Having a kid is no difference at all to be honest. Look at Cal Crutchlow in road racing – I know it is a different scene – but they have to have the same sort of mindset and he's gone quicker since he had a nipper. In my experience I went quicker because I needed to 'keep' more people! I really don't think that anybody with a nipper is rolling it off or they are more cautious."

Everts: "I also went through a stage where it was really tough to make the difference to the other riders. Towards the end of my career I changed my training schedule to work even more on intensity and circuit training to get back more aggression. I had previously been all about

endurance. At one point you get a bit lazy and take the easy way. In my last years I stepped it up again and you could see that in my last season. It was all about preparation."

DBR: Anything can happen at any moment in motocross but can the older guys still vie for the championship?

Everts: "It is going to be hard for them to change. They can win some GPs but it will be hard for them to take a grip on the whole championship. There are only a few guys who can do that for a whole year and be strong and consistent in any track condition. Can they change? Yes, but they really must want it and find the right way to work."

Gruebel: "It is a tough question. Tony showed this year that he still has it."

Cairolì: "This year I am second and I am not riding at even 70 per cent. I think my speed is lower than before: with the injuries I lost some confidence and speed. To be second still means something and when I am slow everybody looks fast. This is what I think. This year was one of

Roger Harvey reckons it'll be difficult for the old guard to strike back



Marnicq Bervoets is another team boss who's looking for the next big thing...

THE NEW BREED

my worst for riding and I felt very bad watching myself on videos and stuff – it wasn't really me that I was seeing. I can still pull the pin and will be more prepared and more focussed next year.”

Bervoets: “I don't think so. I had the same problem towards the end of my career. There will be races like we saw in Lommel this year with [Kevin] Strijbos; he could win because he was consistent and he was on ‘his’ track and it wasn't dangerous. It will be the same for the likes of Desalle and Cairoli – on tracks that are good for them, where it is not crazy-difficult and they don't have to be so aggressive then they can win. You can see it already in Timed Practice. Many times Cairoli will not have a good lap...but he is so strong mentally that if he makes a good start then he gets a kick and can ride his own lines and doesn't have to be aggressive to pass. In those circumstances he can win or ride at the front.”

Cairoli: “It is difficult to find the confidence again. You need results, to steer clear of injuries and have a lot of trust in the bike. I struggled in the beginning of the season with the 450. We moved to the 350 and that was good for me

mentally because I knew the bike but it was not competitive enough so we went back to the 450. We will have another winter now to understand the bike and be ready. That's all I can do at the moment.”

Bervoets: “To be a champion is getting harder and the young guys are pushing more. They are scrubbing so hard and it uses so much energy. In the old days you were not used to it and you had to learn it whereas the guys now seem born into that way of riding. It is automatic and perhaps less so for the older guys.”

Jeffrey Herlings, Red Bull KTM and x3 MX2 FIM World Champion: “Once I step up to the big boys I really need to be on my game. The Lites class in Europe was really for laughing because I knew for the last four or five years when I was on the startline that if I was fit and in pretty good shape then I'd have the championship. Only injuries could stop me and they did. I learned a lot recently with the races in America – the guys are so focussed on their job and intense and I know I need to be really focussed on the first couple of laps next year. I need that intensity and to be really aggressive.

I missed that during these years in MX2 because wherever I started I could just get my speed and I knew I had more than the others. Next year I'll need to do it more American style.”

Harvey: “I think it is going to be really hard for the older guys to match them. Romain started the roll, Tim kept it going and obviously Jeffrey will be strong next year. I think it will be hard for the establishment to match these guys because it will be really intense. The Cairoli's, Nagls, Desalles will find it tough. Even Bobby [28 year old HRC rider Evgeny Bobryshev] said something like ‘how do those two guys get there?’ I think the established riders will find it hard to pick things up.”

Febvre: “If we speak about Nagl and Cairoli then they are near, or in, their 30s but they can still win. The championship? I don't know. I think they can still improve their level and it is up to them. You need to have the same passion and desire. If your mind is saying ‘take it easy, take your time’ then it is more difficult. Gautier never won the championship but he is still young enough to do it. If you have that desire then I think it is possible.”

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RIDER: JED ETHELLES

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OVER AND OUT!

WITH THE BYNS FINISHED AND THE MX2 SERIES IN THE BAG THAT'S THE 2016 NATIONAL SEASON PRETTY MUCH DONE AND DUSTED...

Photos by **Mike Gurney, Max Hind and Scott Dunne**

Hearly congratulations go to Holeshot MX KTM runner Jamie Carpenter as he scoops the 2016 Maxxis MX2 title. Brilliantly going 2-1 at the Foxhill finale and claiming the win in his last ever youth race also meant it was top step number three in the series for JC. Heat one winner Michael Ellis (P&H motorcycles) ran fourth in heat two to claim meeting and championship second.

With the MX Nationals silverware already in the Ellis trophy cabinet he also exits his youth on a high. Completing the experienced hard edged trio at the top, third in the series went to another with an MX Nationals title already won – RFX KTM's Henry Williams.

All three guys now head off to the pro ranks along with amongst others, 15 year old George Grigg Pettitt. Never one to hang around that long in any one class the Carl Nunn protégé didn't have the best of luck at Foxhill. Without a spare machine his

meeting ended on the heat one sighting lap with a busted gear box.

All season GGP had looked set for a top five finish but seventh was his final position. Of the other young guns, Dexter Douglas ran in another consistent 30 plus points score finishing rock solid in championship fourth. Dylan Woodcock in his best show of the Maxxis year went 3-2 at the finale which was more than good enough for podium third as the Team Green man took series fifth.

Making off with the overall victory at rounds one and two Alexander Brown (Apico Husqvarna) started the championship as top gun. He was the standout star again at rounds five and seven but three rounds missed with injury meant series sixth for him.

When it comes to individual moto wins Brownny tops the list with seven, JC hit five, Ellis bagged a brace and single wins went to Henry Williams and Taylor Hammal.

As for the talented Hammal, he debuted in MX2 at Foxhill – a tough baptism for sure – scoring points and finishing in 18th overall.

Over to Cusses Gorse for the BYN closer and in the Youth Open division and with the worst results taken out it was a tight points finish – it was happy days though for the round six winner GGP. Series leader Zander Brown crashed out of championship with yet more broken bones in the penultimate race and GGP becomes one of the youngest ever Open class champions. In a season much affected by injury, Brownny had to settle for series second as Dexter Douglas made championship third his own.

In another knife-edge finish at the top in the 125s, Callum Green – the guy with the most championship race wins – overhauled Todd Ritchie to claim the crown. That said, Callum didn't take a heat win at Cusses as Adam Collings took two while single race victor Tom Grimshaw and Chris Mills respectively

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MX2 supreme
Jamie Carpenter



Tom Grimshaw gets on
the gas at Cusses



Josh Peters finishes
second in the Biggies



Alexander Brown misses
another title through injury



Jack Grayshon
grabs SW85
series bronze



James Smith
grips it and rips it



Bobby Bruce is beaten to
the SW85 title by Ike Carter

filled the podium positions. The other heat wins went to Harry Kimber and series runner-up Todd Ritchie.

In the Biggies Rossi Beard topped off a brilliant season in the best possible style, taking the final two race wins and the title. In his best performance of the year James Smith battled his way on to the Cusses podium as runner-up with Josh Peters third. Peters, much to his credit – in only his third season of racing – finished as championship runner-up with unlucky Dominic Lancett hanging on to series third. The 14-year-old Lancett went into Cusses as the winner of the two previous rounds but with both race bikes failing, and with Dominic crashing heavily in race three his series was over.

The Smallies title went to one of the most dominant riders of the season – imperious Ike Carter. Totally bossing it with four out of five race wins at Cusses

as Bobby Bruce picked up the other win – that's been a familiar scenario all season. As clear as Carter was the best, Bruce ended up a clear runner-up as TM's Jack Grayshon won the tighter scrap for series third.

Following his round one clean sweep at FatCat Rage posed the question – could 65 reigning champ Charlie Heyman go all season unbeaten? We actually fancied he might and with worst results dropped he did but in reality though a heavy tumble at Luechars means his championship record reads 27 wins from 28 starts. Charlie Heyman, youth rider of the year? I'd vote for that!

In any other season Alfie Jones would have been a more than worthy supreme and following a brilliant season he takes series silver while after a tasty scrap Kieran Boughen beat off Wal Beaney and Bailey Johnson for national bronze.

FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

BYN Junior 65

1 Charlie Heyman 1125, 2 Alfie Jones 1000, 3 Kieran Boughen 964, 4 Wal Beaney 951, 5 Bailey Johnson 942, 6 James Barker 781

BYN SW85

1 Ike Carter 1870, 2 Bobby Bruce 1764, 3 Jack Grayshon 1615, 4 Louie Kessel 1565, 5 Jack Lindsay 1535, 6 Toby Potter 1464

BYN BW85

1 Rossi Beard 1750 pts, 2 Josh Peters 1574, 3 Dominic Lancett 1531, 4 Sam Nunn 1491, 5 Joel Rizzi 1481, 6 Kyle McNichol 1314

BYN 125cc

1 Callum Green 1013 pts, 2 Todd Ritchie 1009, 3 Ben Clark 960, 4 Harry Kimber 919, 5 Tom Grimshaw 892, 6 Jake Winnard 831

BYN Youth Open

1 George Grigg Pettitt 1028, 2 Alexander Brown 1020, 3 Dexter Douglas 983, 4 David Galvin 907, 5 Jed Etchells 899, 6 Howard Wainwright 870

Maxxis MX2



1 Jamie Carpenter 335, 2 Michael Ellis 299, 3 Henry Williams 287, 4 Dexter Douglas 259, 5 Dylan Woodcock 227, 6 Alexander Brown 220



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SPOTLIGHT ON...

KALVIN KELLY #90

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With Calvin Kelly and William Haddock claiming a total 14 race wins each the battle for the Under 8's MCF British Auto title swung back and forth all season. Going into the Sherwood finale it was on a knife and with a brand new 2017 KTM SX 65 up for grabs it was no small prize tagged onto the champion's crown.

On the weekend Will Haddock started with the points lead but it was Calvin Kelly who came away with all the glory. Three heat wins plus two second place returns did the trick for KK – two months on and with plans for next season already shaping up Rage had a word with Calvin along with dad Andrew....

Rage: Hi Guys, massive congratulations Calvin on winning the MCF British title. With dropping worst scores and being so close in the points that last round must have been a tense affair?

AK: "Calvin never seems to be under pressure but when he knows there's a championship to be won he turns into a very determined focused kid. He knows the job has to be done and is very good with the points system. He will ask, what do I need to do dad? If I say one win then a top three to take the championship he just says okay! On the weekend it was mum and dad who were more tense than Calvin."

KK: "After the first race on day two my dad told me the championship was mine. I said, I'm going to win the last race – and I did."

Rage: Having moved up to a 65 now, how is it going?

KK: "My dad got me a 65 to practise on but I wanted to race it, so far I have done five meetings. I came fifth and then fourth overall, third overall twice but my best meeting was at round 10 of the 90 Racing MXC championship. On the Saturday I won the Auto title with two rounds to go, then next day on the 65 I finished second."

Rage: What's the plan going through the winter and into next season?

AK: "There's going to be lots of practising on the 65 now and doing any races that come up. Training hard all winter with Richard Cannings and preparing for the Thor British Youth Nationals in 2017. We will also be doing the 90 Racing MXC's championship – that's Kalvins favourite club."

Rage: Apart from actually winning the MCF British title do you have another particular stand out memory from the MX Premier series?

KK: "The round at Preston Docks was my favourite. I qualified first and won all five races. It rained really bad in the last race and I couldn't see so I took

my goggles off and put them round my arm – I like racing in the rain."

Rage: As a family does it matter particularly which code you race with – do you have a favourite?

AK: "We just love racing and so does Calvin so any club or code is good. Master Kids UK and 90 Racing MXC would have to be our favourites though."

Rage: How do you sum up the Calvin's season and who do you need to thank?

AK: "2016 has been a great year for Calvin. He's been so consistent in every championship and he's really shown he is going to be a force to be reckoned with in the future. Winning a KTM mountain bike and a brand new KTM 65 to use for next season was simply amazing and he's also won national, club, winter and Master Kids championships too. As parents we couldn't be prouder.

"We would like to thank Jason at Tee Bee Motorcycles, Tim at AES Leeds, Gaz at Vale Plumbing and Heating, Airedale Plant Services also decade Europe and Carly at Malcolm Rathmell Sport Ltd for Calvin's rider support package in 2017. And finally Richard Cannings for all the excellent training and support he gives."

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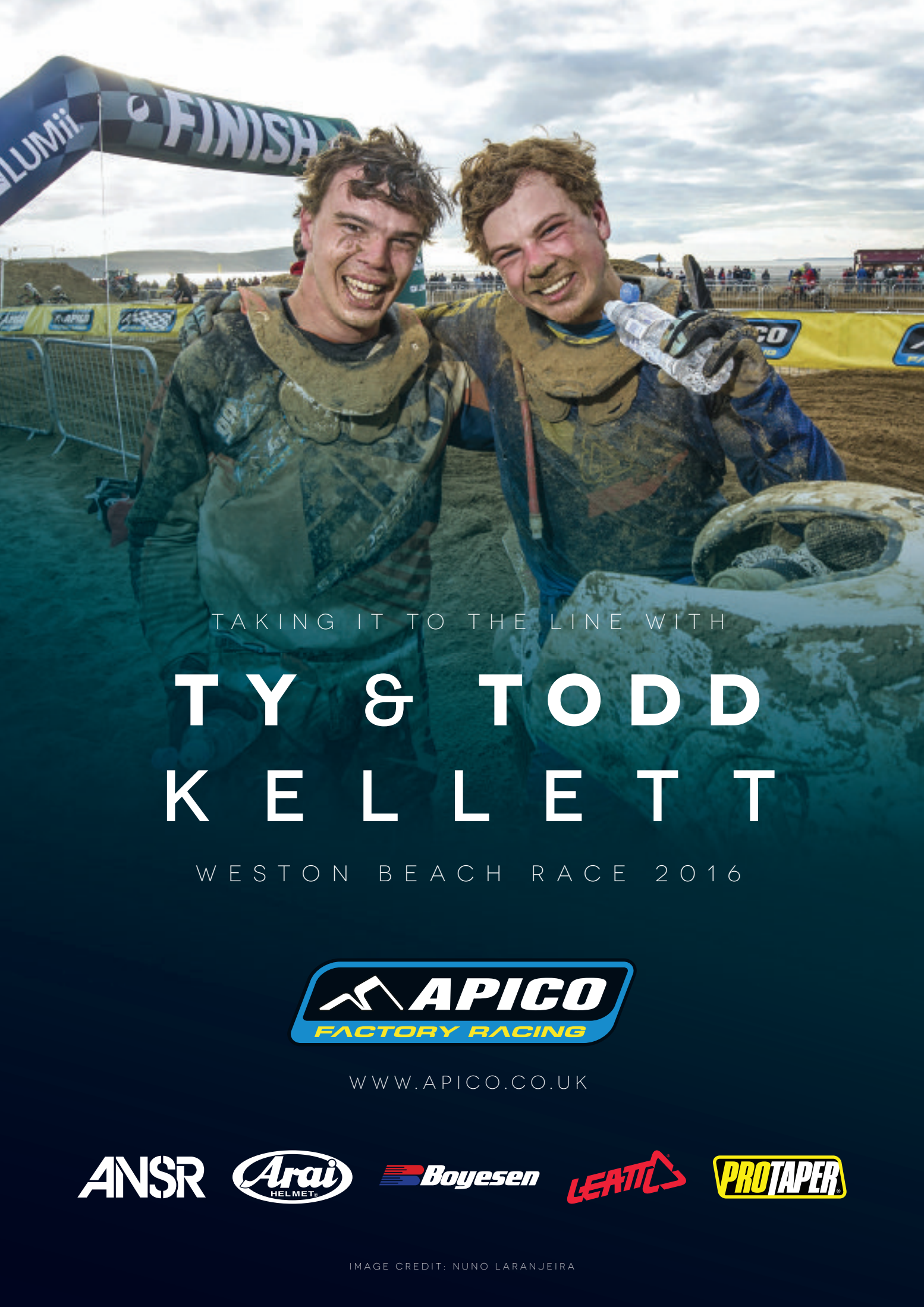
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